The Dissertation Committee for Christina Marie Ridder Certifies that this is the approved version of the following dissertation:

Searching for Self and Others:

Black-White Racial Identity Exploration

Through Student Organizations

Committee:

Victor Saenz, Supervisor

Sharon Justice

Richard Reddick

Deborah Paredez

Jennifer Holme

Searching for Self and Others:

Black-White Racial Identity Exploration

Through Student Organizations

by

Christina Marie Ridder, B.S.; M.S.

Dissertation

Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School of

The University of Texas at Austin

in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements

for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

The University of Texas at Austin

May 2011

Dedication

This work is dedicated to my family: Chris, Niko and Quinn.

This work is also dedicated to multiracial students. Find your voices.

Acknowledgements

This work began as a journey. I waited until I knew and felt passionate about a topic before I started a PhD program. After I attended the Social Justice Training Institute in 2005, I knew exactly what I wanted to research. Thanks to SJTI for helping me to find my voice, even though I cried most of the time, being an extremely empathetic and sensitive soul, I still carry the stories and struggles with me every day. It has made me stronger and reinforced my passion for social justice.

Thank you to the Office of Student Life at the McCombs School of Business. Even though we're in an academic college, the light and life we bring to our students from a Student Affairs lens is powerful. The love and support that we have built in our office is a thing of beauty and is so unique. Special thanks to Stephanie Hinojosa-Galvan, Lauren Cove, Paula Taylor and the outstanding Graduate Students that we have partnered with, taught and nurtured. Without all of you, our office and my academic life would not have been possible. Thanks to all my friends in the Undergraduate Program Office. Your laughter, dedication, support and love makes my job easier every day.

Thank you to the plethora of friends that I have found through the Education Administration department at The University of Texas at Austin. I could not have survived all of the classes, and learned as much as I did without you. Special thanks to my dissertation buddies: Smita Ruzicka, Laura Cortez and Tracy Arambula-Turner. It was a pleasure to write with you, read your work, cry with you, support and be supported by you. Thank you to Dr. Saenz for telling me that I can do this. Thank you to Dr. Justice for sharing good laughs, and working me through the hard stuff.

My family is my rock. Thanks to Chris Ridder for making quiet space for me all the times that I had to get my reading or writing done. You are the best thing that has ever happened to me. The twins are the love of my life. You are smart, funny, silly, talented and overall super stars. I cannot wait for the things that you will do Quinn and Niko; Niko and Quinn; each equal and unique.

Without my parents, Tom and Judy, there is no way this little girl so far from home would have done anything this big. It is your strength and drive for a better life for us that has made me the person that I am. I love you both so much.

To Amy, little sister with the big heart, thank you for supporting me, encouraging me, fighting with me and loving me. Nan has an angel sitting on my shoulder, you have a matching one on yours. Thanks to Mary Kay for always being authentic, listening to me and being my biggest fan.

The students in this study are super stars. I gained so much insight and admiration for you and your families, thank you for sharing your stories.

To the friends with which I share deep conversations, wine, good food, a good cry and endless laughter, you are my "girls". Dr. Annemarie Seifert, Dr. Betty Jeanne Wolfe-Taylor and Amy Yearwood, you are some fierce women.

Without my faith, beliefs and values nothing is possible.

Searching for Self and Others:

Black-White Racial Identity Exploration

Through Student Organizations

Christina Marie Ridder, PhD

The University of Texas at Austin, 2011

Supervisor: Victor Saenz

Searching for Self and Others is a qualitative, phenomenological study which utilizes Wijeyesinghe's Factor Model of Multiracial Identity through in depth interviews with eight students. The study included two research questions focused on Black-White multiracial students at a predominately White institution and how the level of involvement related to their racial identity and other social identities (class and power/choice were most salient).

The purpose of this study was to explore the use of student organizations as a key factor in Black-White racial identity for college students. Racial identity is a process for people of color to find a sense of self, and is a constantly evolving process. Increasing the awareness of how Black-White students utilize student groups can assist colleges to make multiracial students feel comfortable on our campuses, to understand identity

struggles and how we might create a more open environment. Student groups can assist in constructing a positive racial climate in which all students feel accepted and able to discuss issues of identity.

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Chapter One: Introduction

Imagine a typical college campus, with students walking across the green, talking in groups, studying in various places and sitting in the library with books propped all around. Every day, students make decisions about their major, how much time to expend learning new concepts and what to become involved in after classes are over. "What students do during college generally matters more to what they learn and whether they persist to graduation than who they are or even where they go to college" (Wolf-Wendel, Ward, & Kinzie, 2009). For many students, their social identities (race, gender, religion, sexual orientation) add another layer of consideration to what they want to become involved in, whether they share those identities with other students, faculty or staff and how much they would like to choose an involvement activity based on that identity. Identity development begins early in life, and it is uncertain when, if ever, it ends.

> It is generally agreed that developing an identity is a life-long process; that a basic identity is solidified during adolescence and young adulthood, but as life progresses it is continually refined (Alessandria & Nelson, 2005, p. 4).

Included in the multiple identities of students is racial identity. Racial identity "refers to the dimension of a person's overall self-concept that is grounded in his or her experiences as a member of a broad racial group" (Wallace, 2001, p. 35). For multiracial students, those with a parent from more than one racial background, racial identity is affected by pressure to choose one race over another and a lack of empathy from loved ones (Nishimura, 1998). Racial identity is defined as the process by which persons of color develop a positive sense of self in the context of a society that discriminates against them (Parham & Helms, 1981). Therefore, the choice of what to do outside of class thus becomes a complex process as well. The population of multiracial people was 6.8 million on the 2000 Census. Those who indicated a Black-White racial combination

totaled 784,764 (The two or more races population: 2000, 2001). Preliminary estimates for the 2010 Census show that those checking more than one race box grew by 35%, totaling almost 3.78 million (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). For these students, participation in minority organizations or campus activities (e.g. The African American Student Alliance) was not satisfying because of subtle pressure to "choose a racial identity" (Nishimura, 1998). Other pressures include phenotype as a result of the one-drop rule and social segregation. According to Harris (2002), multiracial people are part of a socially marginalized group because first, prior to the 2000 Census, they were not a recognized group and second, there is little evidence that minorities are any less discriminatory toward multiracial persons than are non-minorities.

Students with more than one racial background will show up on college campuses in greater numbers in the coming years. "According to the 2000 Census, 4.0 percent of those under age eighteen and 7.7 percent of those under age eighteen reporting Hispanic or Latino ethnicity indicated more than one category. By the year 2020, multiracial students will be about as common as Asian undergraduates were in 2000" (Renn, 2004, p. 1).

It is imperative that colleges and universities begin to more fully understand the multiracial population, no matter how big or small. The multiracial population will continue to grow. "Little is known about how they negotiate the racialized landscape of higher education and how that landscape will be altered by the imminent influx of students who do not identify in only one racial category" (Renn, 2004, p. 2). The Black-White mixed student population is important to research as the diversity of campuses changes, the racial climate fluctuates and the culture shifts. The multiracial population of college students has unique factors that shape their identities, particularly in terms of race. Involvement is such an important aspect of college student development, the

convergence of racial identity and student involvement will present a different approach to this population. This study presents research on Black-White mixed students, their experiences on college campuses in terms of social identities (particularly race) and their involvement in student organizations. The study contributes to the body of literature regarding students of color on campuses and will assist practitioners in counseling and advising multiracial students. Understanding this population provides insight into how they interact with other African American and White students and where on campus they may feel most accepted. Student organizations play a role in student development and knowing that Black-White students struggle with finding their place inside these groups contributes to how we construct a positive racial climate on campuses. Including multiracial students in campus language when speaking about race and creating spaces where they may feel a part of multicultural centers are ways in which practitioners can make colleges and universities welcome for all.

BACKGROUND

Mixed race people in America have a long history. Understanding this history will assist in the knowledge of the social and historical context that multiracial people experience. In the 18th century, Carolus Linneaus first divided humans into taxonomies: Africanus, Americanus, Asiaticus, Europeanus, and Monstrosus. In 1775, Johann Friedrich Blumenbach established the categories Caucasoid, Mongoloid, Ethiopian (later Negroid), American Indian and Malayan races. In the 19th century, a shift occurred from a taxonomic to a biological classification of race. These grouping by race have since caused much debate as the people crossed the categorical lines, causing blurred and extended groups of “non-pure” people. In particular, many of these boundaries were along the lines of Black and White. In the 18th and 19th centuries hypodescent, or the one-drop rule, defined individuals who had any “Black blood” as being a Black person.

It existed to maintain racial purity and bar access of land ownership, education, and civil rights among many other privileges.

According to David A. Hollinger:

> The movement for recognition of 'mixed race' has made some headway, including for people with a fraction of African ancestry, but most governments, private agencies, educational institutions, and advocacy organizations that classify and count people by ethnographic categories at all continue to perpetuate hypodescent racialization when they talk about African Americans. (Hollinger, 2005, p. 18)

Active efforts to raise awareness of this emerging group were led by parents involved in interracial relationships as early as the 1950s. "In the latter part of the decade, they found local advocacy groups to create a sense of community and ensure that schools identified their children appropriately" (Padilla, 2005).

Loving vs Virginia (1967)

In June 1958, Margaret Jeter, an African American woman, and Richard Loving, a White man, were married in the District of Columbia. Shortly after, the couple returned to Virginia where a grand jury issued an indictment charging the Lovings with violating Virginia's ban on interracial marriage. On January 6, 1959, the Lovings pleaded guilty to the charge and were sentenced to one year in jail. The trial judge suspended the sentence for a period of 25 years on the condition that the Lovings leave the state and not return to Virginia for 25 years. The Lovings then resided in the District of Columbia, and filed a motion in the state trial court to vacate the judgment and set aside the sentence on the grounds that the statutes which they had violated were repugnant to the Fourteenth Amendment. In 1964, the Lovings instituted a class action in the United States District Court. In 1965, the state trial judge denied the request, upon which the Lovings appealed to the Supreme Court. In March of 1966, the Virginia Supreme Court of Appeals upheld the law, but in June of 1967, the U.S. Supreme Court unanimously ruled the law

unconstitutional. In 1967, through a landmark case, Loving v. Virginia, the Supreme Court declared Virginia's anti-miscegenation statute unconstitutional, thereby ending all race-based legal restriction on marriage in the United States. Thus, the 16 states which still had antimiscegenation laws on their books were forced to erase them.

In the 1970s an interracial baby boom occurred, and the growth of multiracial people increased. As the multiracial population grows, a need to understand specific issues surrounding identity is needed. "In more recent years, we find that multiraciality has become a more visible and accepted feature of our cultural landscape. The phenomena of mixed race marriages, multiracial families, interracial relationships and cross-race adoption are on the rise" (Kwan & Speirs, 2004). Three contemporary generations of mixed race people currently exists: The first generation was born between the late 1940s and the late 1960s and grew up or experienced its young adult years during the civil rights movement. The second generation was born between the repeal of the antimiscegenation laws and approximately 1980. The third generation was born after 1980 and is now going through the school system. "There is reason to believe that another generation recently born, from the mid-1990s to the present, will experience being multiracial even differently than did the generation just coming of age" (Root, 2003). Understanding the college age population who will be coming into colleges and universities, identifying themselves as multiracial is a growing field of research.

Census Data

According to census data, the number of children from interracial marriages increased from less than one-half million in 1970, to about two million in 1990 (U.S. Census Bureau). On the 1990 census, Americans were only allowed to mark one racial category, and the category of race preceded a question regarding Hispanic ethnicity. In Census 2000, the population of the United States was shown to be 281.4 million.

Americans were allowed to mark more than one race, and the Hispanic (adding Latino) identity question was moved to precede the question on race. The American Indian, Alaskan Native options were combined and a section for tribal affiliation for both races was added. Asian and Pacific Islander categories were separated in 2000, with Asian categories listed in alphabetical order. "Of the total, 6.8 million people, or 2.4 percent reported more than one race. Census 2000 asked separate questions on race and Hispanic and Latino origin. Hispanics who reported more than one race are included in the two or more races population" (U.S. Census Bureau, 2007).

The Census 2000 question on race included 15 separate response categories and three areas where respondents could write in a more specific race. The response categories and write in answers were combined to create the five standard Office of Management and Budget (OMB) race categories plus the Census Bureau category of "Some Other Race." "The six race categories include: White, Black or African American, American Indian and Alaska Native, Asian, Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander and Some Other Race" (U.S. Census Bureau, 2007).

The new Census question on race gave multiracial people the ability to mark as many races with which they identified. It was considered a major victory inside mixed race communities, and posed many challenges for federal and state programs which rely on race counts for funding. "The indeterminacy of race is not new for people with mixed heritage, but whereas the old system put the burden on choosing a single race on individuals, the new system will put this burden on the government, institutions, and users of racial data" (Goldstein, 2001). Of the 6.8 million people who checked more than one box on Census 2000, the number of persons who reported two or more races and were under the age of 18 was 42% "suggesting that millions will be arriving on campus (Jaschik, 2008). For both Hispanics and non-Hispanics, a higher proportion of those

under 18 reporting more than one race was higher when compared with those reporting one race. Of those who were under the age of 18 and reported one race, the percentage was 25%. Among the 2.2 million Hispanics who reported more than one race, 43% were under 18. Of the 33.1 million Hispanics who reported one race, 34% were under 18.

In 1997, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) began a review of how ethnic statistics are gathered and reported by the Federal Government. The official standards were released according to the Office of Management and Budget (Katzen, 2003) included:

> Institutions will be required to 1) use a two-question format when collecting race/ethnic data, 2) allow students and employees to select one or more of five races, 3) maintain detailed information on student and employee responses for at least three years (or until completion of any legal action involving these records), 4) collect data from students and employees who enter the institution from fall 2010 and later using the two-question format, and 5) begin Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) reporting using the new race/ethnicity categories for Fall Enrollment and Human Resources in the 2010-2011 collection year and all relevant components in the 2011-2012 collection year.

There are two questions that will aid in the collection of the racial and ethnic data: 1. Is the person Hispanic or Latino? and 2. Select one or more races (American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, Black or African American, Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander, White or Two or more races). Students may also check a box if their race or ethnicity is unknown and if they are a non-resident alien (of any race or ethnicity). The implications of data collection for colleges and universities will require the coordination of Admissions, Registrar, Financial Aid, Human Resources, Affirmative Action,

Institutional Research and Information Technology. Offices will review all computer systems, paper forms and any other document with ethnic data collection and make the necessary changes for updated reporting before the Fall of 2010. "Adopting the new standards will result in new data, and possibly in a different structure for institutional databases to support multiple race/ethnic categories for each individual" (Katzen, 2003).

With the new requirements for colleges to collect data on students, the number of students checking more than one box is anticipated to expand. There is concern that students who would have checked one box in the past may now check more than one. If colleges use a "two or more" generic category, students might also be grouped together but have no commonality in their races other than have two or more. There is not a standard for colleges to collect data. "There is a wide variation in how colleges and universities in the United States collect racial and ethnic data for students who identify with more than one race" (Padilla, 2005). Even though collecting data in a new way presents many logistical issues, allowing students the opportunity to express their racial identity and will enable institutions to have a better representation of their student population. Once the data is more accurate of the multiracial population, the need for increased services will also be apparent as well as new strategies for understanding this population.

Research in higher education

Research in the field of higher education has grown and shifted over the past 30 years, and the study of students of color on college campuses has become an important aspect as universities continue to grow and diversify (Ahuna, 2000; Parks, 1986; Spencer, 2006). Ahuna, Banning and Hughes (2000) chronicled the scholarship focusing on diversity in Student Affairs for the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators and found three broad themes:

- In the 1970s, there was a focus on the changing demographics of the student body, along with a concern that the Student Affairs staff members of the field were not nearly as diverse as the students.
- In the early 1980s, a shift occurred to the adjustment of college students, their retention and what they needed to change in order to adapt to the college environment as well as what being a racial minority on college campuses meant.
- In the later 1980s, there was a shift from the student to the environment in which students grow and thrive on college campuses and how institutions can support and value all students.

In the 1990s, research on multiracial people expanded the body of knowledge on people of color (Poston, 1990; Root, 1992). "Within this literature, however, interracial and interethnic topics are largely limited to discussions of educational contexts inhabited by people from distinct ethnic and racial groups" (Wallace, 2004, p. ix). A focus on multiracial identity formation and what factors contributed to that construction were ground-breaking studies and allowed the study of mixed college students to arise. "Reconsidering the identity formation process among children and adults who assert a biracial/ethnic identity, a number of researchers are finding evidence that support a qualitatively different developmental process…" (Wallace, 2001, p. 36). Multiracial is defined as persons with each parent representing different racial categories (Root, 1992).

In the 2000s multiracial identity theory continued to grow (Spencer, 2006; Wijeyesinghe, 2001) and the diversity of the college campus was heavily researched (Chavez, Guido-DeBrito, & Mallory, 2003; Gurin, Dey, Hurtado, & Gurin, 2002; Hu, 2003; Nelson, Thomas, Bridges, & Morelon-Quainoo, 2007). The topic of mixed race students added to the literature about students of color on campuses. Studies included the

formation of multiracial identities and how experiences at colleges shaped them and their views of race (Nishimura, 1998; Renn, 2000, 2003, 2004, 2008; Wallace, 2001, 2004).

U.S. Census data from 2000 reflected a population of 6.8 million people (2.4% of the population) who identified themselves as two or more races. Forty percent of that population was under the age of 18, indicating the number of students who have the potential to attend college is approximately two million. It is projected that the college population will grow by 19% to about 16 million by the year 2015 as well as 80% of the 2.6 million new students attending college will be African American, Latino, and Asian Pacific Islander (Carnevale, 2000). That number will include those students who have checked more than one race on admissions applications. Hispanics and Asians both increased their populations from 2000 to 2008 by nearly a third, and African Americans grew by 10%, compared by a modest growth of two percent for Whites (Frey, 2008).

Because of this rise in population of the mixed race population, the topic of multiraciality is becoming an important addition in the research about racial identity development. “The changing of Census categories has ushered in a new concern by many different constituencies about the experiences of multiracial persons” (Brackett et al., 2006) . There is a need to understand more about the history of multiracial people in America, how their identity may be shaped by different social and cultural factors, and how the younger generation of multiracial students is identifying themselves. The pressure to choose one race over the other, as in days past, is shifting to a new form of choice that includes a broader multiracial identity. How this identity has been created over time is crucial to understanding the mixed college student population.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Many multiracial people struggle with how and when to identify themselves racially, whether on forms and applications, or in social settings (Brackett, et al., 2006;

Nishimura, 1998; Renn, 2004). Talbot (2008) interviewed 10 multiracial students, and found these topics to be particularly salient: families and communication around the subject of race; the omnipresence of phenotype (physical features and appearance); the process of self-labeling (how a student may come to identify themselves racially); and the opportunity to be involved in race based groups without having to choose a race helped students feel more whole. "Identity development is a complex process for individuals from mixed-race backgrounds" (Kerwin, Ponterotto, Jackson, & Harris, 1993). Not only must they deal with prejudice similar to that experienced by people who are members of non-White ethnic and racial groups, but they must also decide 'how to reconcile the heritages of both parents in a society that categorizes individuals into single groups" (Evans, 2010, p. 291). The family environment and upbringing determines how racial identity is approached. "In the case of mixed heritage youth, sometimes these adolescents expressed stronger attachment with one strand of their family than others or with one part of their cultural background than others, making it easier and more comfortable to identify with that part of their heritage" (Lopez, 2004, p. 34). Parents provide a racial framework for young people that often establishes how the child may identify (mixed, monoracially, situationally) (Brackett, et al., 2006; Wijeyesinghe, 2001).

For young people who question their racial identity and wish to explore it further, racial categories provide confusion on which box to check. The 2000 Census made this decision a little easier for some, in that it was the first opportunity to identify with more than one race on an official federal form. "As for the 2000 census… it was a count of a multiracial population, not the multiracial population" (Harris, 2002, p. 625). The census captured those with more than one race if the person who completed the census form filled it out as such (for example a monoracial parent filling out the form for a mixed child), it may not have captured those who self-identified as multiracial but did not fill

out the form themselves. Although the race categories are a successful step in allowing multiracial people to identify with as many races as they care to choose, it is simply a data set. There is so much more to racial identity, particularly for mixed people, than checking off a box.

In 1996, Alipuria and Phinney conducted a study of 194 racially mixed high school students and found that more than 75% of students with one Black parent labeled themselves as Black. None of the students with one White and one Black parent labeled themselves as White (pp. 139-158). Brackett et al. (2006) explained the position of Black-White multiracial people in terms of standpoint theory which states that a person's views are affected by where they stand in the social hierarchy. Often those with Black-White racial background have views of themselves from a lower position as culturally subordinate. They are not White, but neither are they Black. Environmental cues are usually more significant, such as a campus racial climate (Brackett, et al., 2006).

In order to document the research on multiracial students, issues of how race and identity affect these students must be more fully understood. For multiracial students on college campuses, identity is shaped through their academic and social experiences on campus. "Smaller than the body of research on how multiracial students identify themselves is the literature on how they come to have those identities" (Renn, 2008, p. 17). There are many co-curricular experiences through which students can learn more about themselves (residence halls, intramurals, work study, student organizations). In recent studies, multiracial students have indicated that campus activities are not as fulfilling because of the pressure to choose a racial identity (King, 2008; Renn, 2004). Multiracial students find challenges in locating campus organizations that fit their unique and special circumstances, especially if the group is race based. Students seek out identity based student groups to meet new people, socialize, have more of a political voice on

campus, to find a space to express and explore their identity in relationship to the particular characteristic of the group, and in regard to a multiracial group specifically, want to share their multiracial experience and background (S. Harper & Quaye, 2007, 2009; Johnston & Ozaki, 2008). The key problem under investigation in this study was to discover how multiracial students utilize student organizations, how much they are involved in them and how this affects their racial identity.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

Multiracial students need safe spaces on campus to explore their racial identities and to feel comfortable building a consciousness of self (Renn, 2004). These spaces include engaging in classroom knowledge (taking a race based course), in residence halls, co-curricular organizations and in student organizations. Racial identity is defined as the process by which persons of color develop a positive sense of self in the context of a society that discriminates against them (Parham & Helms, 1981). Student organizations and physical spaces are needed to recognize multiracial students and to support their multiracial identity development. Campus environments which recognize multiracial students on admission applications, in campus spaces, and in the encouragement of mixed race student organizations can offer greater support (Talbot, 2008). Race based student organizations can become catalysts to explore multiracial identity, in similar ways that African American, Asian, Latino, Native American and other groups assist with finding support structures among persons with similar backgrounds, language and culture. Creating an environment in which multiracial students can be recognized and thrive is an integral part of their racial identity development and can be accomplished through the experiences that students receive in a campus based organization. The purpose of this study was to discover barriers and/or support that student organizations provide to

multiracial students and their identities and how higher education practitioners can create environments which support these organizations. This study addresses two questions:

1. How does the level of involvement for Black-White undergraduate students at a predominately White institution relate to racial identity?
2. How does the level of involvement for Black-White undergraduate students at a predominately White institution relate to other social identities (gender, socio-economic status, sexual orientation, class etc)?

The racial identity of Black-White students is the primary focus of the study. The framework utilizes Wijeyesinghe's Factor Model of Multiracial Identity (FMMI) which includes eight areas which may affect racial identity. This model will be more explored in depth in Chapter Two. This study utilizes a phenomenological approach which seeks to know the essence of the person. The interviews were semi-structured and the questions were designed to engage the participant to tell their story about their racial background, family and experiences around the topic of being a mixed race person. The method for this study was a qualitative analysis with semi-structured interviews. The students invited to participate in this study were a) undergraduate students at Big University b) in their third or fourth year of study, c) have parents of two different racial backgrounds, one African American or Black and one White or parents of mixed Black-White heritage. A small group of students was identified for in-depth interviews in the fall of 2010. Snowball-sampling was used by contacting colleagues and students across campus, as well as student organizations. Potential candidates who agreed to participate were interviewed in a neutral location. An intake-survey was sent to each student to collect demographic information such as hometown, gender, classification, best contact information, age, major and a few short questions to begin the conversation about racial identity (see Appendix C).

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

College campuses have significantly changed over the last century, and opportunities are available for all students to secure a degree. The number and variety of experiences, inside and outside the classroom need to be as diverse as the students. As the multiracial population grows, and the number of students reaching college age rises, it is critical for higher education practitioners to more fully understand the population arriving on campuses in order to address issues of college adjustment, a further understanding of the role family plays, and how large a role student organizations could play in their interaction with other students. Little is known about how student organizations can impact the identity of multiracial college students -- what they may choose to become involved in (for example a race based group) or the avoidance of certain types of groups, why, and the effects on identity for multiracial students.

The study of multiracial college students is a timely issue on college campuses. The population of mixed race students is growing and how these students experience college is important to student development research. Student organizations provide an avenue in which to explore many aspects of identity, and how multiracial students might become involved as leaders on college campuses. As the multiracial population continues to grow and the number showing up on college campuses increases, the understanding of how mixed students relate to other people in college settings is important. Where mixed students may or may not feel comfortable is as relevant as the study of other populations of color. Research on points of interaction, such as a student organization, has proven to be crucial in the study of many college students (Gellin, 2003). College practitioners can discover more about the growing population of mixed students by examining where and how these students are involved. Supporting avenues of engagement can be one proactive way in which to increase the success of multiracial students. This study contributes to the literature on college students of color; including

adjustment, retention, leadership and the importance of student organizations as a tool for a sense of community on campus. It also furthers the research of multiracial students and examines unique issues they may face. In regards to student organizations, the staff and faculty who advise groups deal with a myriad of issues not only related to event production and leadership, but also fill a counseling and conflict role. The understanding of pressures and strains that multiracial students may face contributes to the foundation of solid student organizations, supports multiracial students and builds a stronger university community.

SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS

The study was conducted on a single campus. The study is also limited to Black-White multiracial students and does not include other mixed race people. Upper division students in their third or fourth year are the focus; first and second year students are excluded as they may have different experiences. The snowball technique was primarily employed to identify students, instead of focusing on those involved in certain campus programs, such as retention or a specific organization. The engagement explored is limited to student organizations, which is a more social activity, rather than looking at students engaged in academic or other settings.

DEFINITIONS

The following definitions provide a framework for the use of the terms in this study. It is important to know how I utilize the terms as many have political, social and historical contexts.

Biracial, mixed, multiracial: those persons with one parent of each racial categories. In this study, biracial, multiracial and mixed are used interchangeably.

Black is used instead of African American, reflecting the wider African Diaspora.

White: European American.

Black-White: those students of African and European descent with one parent of each racial background.

Multiracial college students: those enrolled in colleges and universities who have one parent of each racial category.

Monoracial college students: those enrolled in colleges and universities who have parents of one racial category.

Student organizations: groups of students on a college campus who gather for social interactions, typically around a certain topic (academic, Greek affiliations, honor societies, hobbies etc).

Racial identity: "refers to the dimension of a person's overall self-concept that is grounded in his or her experiences as a member of a broad racial group" (Wallace, 2001, p. 35)

Student development theory: theories which help in the understanding of college students' maturation and change over time spent in a university setting. These theories may include psychosocial, identity, cognitive-structural and typological.

Factor Model of Multiracial Identity (FMMI): model developed by Charmaine Wijeysinghe (2001) which includes eight aspects which could contribute to multiracial identity.

Intersectionality: a term coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw (1991) in the legal profession for the crossroads of gender and racial oppression. A term that takes in all aspects of identities and their interconnectedness, differences and commonalities (gender, race, sexual orientation, ability, age etc).

Critical Incident: a defining moment or event in life that makes a person question or re-think beliefs and values.

SUMMARY

In sum, relatively little is known about the multiracial population, particularly those of college age. Mixed students will be arriving on campus in increasing numbers, and understanding unique issues is more important than ever for college practitioners. Students have many opportunities at universities for growth inside and outside of the classroom. Student organizations provide social outlets as well as chances to explore students' beliefs and values. Multiracial students struggle with what co-curricular activities in which to become involved, especially if it is a race based group. Family upbringing, community values, culture and language are background factors that students bring to college and can influence comfort level in what group to join. This study sought an understanding of what groups Black-White students choose to join or not join and how that affects their racial and other social identities. To further explore this issue, an in-depth overview of the literature is presented in Chapter Two, an overview of the methods is presented in Chapter Three and analysis and discussion in Chapters Four-Six.

Chapter Two: Review of the Literature

Research on students of color has significantly increased in the past two decades (Gurin, Dey, Hurtado & Gurin, 2002; Hu & Kuh, 2003; Chavez, 2003; Nelson, Thomas, Bridges & Morelon-Quainoo, 2007). Identity is a central tenet to understanding a person's background, culture, language and decision making process among a few factors. The following chapter explores literature on student development theory, multiracial college students, identity theories, the construction of race, racial identity, Black identity, White identity, multiracial identity and intersectionality. All of these areas are important to understand as related to how engagement in a student organization could have profound effects on racial identity for Black-White students. The review of literature will help to situate the study of multiracial students within a historical and student development context and help develop means for practitioners to work more effectively with multiracial students by developing an understanding of their identities.

STUDENT DEVELOPMENT THEORY

Involvement

In order to explore how student organizations can impact the racial identity of Black-White students, a thorough investigation of student involvement and the role it plays in growth and development is warranted. There are several theories that lend themselves to studying multiracial college students and involvement. Astin's (1985) theory of student involvement states that time is one of the most important aspects of a student's college career and takes into account many of the aforementioned questions; however, it does not consider students of color, including multiracial students. Astin's theory is one of the most frequently cited models in reference to student involvement. The I-E-O model developed by Astin addresses on-campus participation through three constructs: involvement, environment and output. The model is useful in examining the

activities in which students as individuals are participating and the environment created by campuses to encourage the involvement. It is also useful in reinforcing the need for student activities offices and other campus programming which supports the development of students. "What students do during college generally matters more to what they learn and whether they persist to graduation than who they are or even where they go to college" (Kinzie, 2009, p. 410). Involvement can include student organizations, residence halls, intramural sports and a host of other co-curricular activities. However, involvement could mean showing up at meetings, study groups or occasionally attending events, it does not necessarily mean being engaged in the activity to a full extent. It is the action of being fully engaged which leads to deeper learning and ultimately, a broader college experience.

Involvement in student organizations has been shown to correlate positively with several areas of psychosocial development. Specifically, college juniors who are members of student organizations score higher than nonmembers on such factors as educational involvement, career planning, lifestyle planning, cultural participation, and academic autonomy (Cooper, Healy, & Simpson, 1994).

Research has also shown first-year students who join student organizations have higher scores on developing a purpose for their life and time in college than those who do not join, have more mature interpersonal relationships, are more tolerant of others, better life management, educational involvement, better decision-making skills and leadership (Cooper, et al., 1994; Kuh, 2005; Pascarella, 2005). "Although this relationship may be either unidirectional or mutually reinforcing, it is evident that students who are involved in clubs and organizations during their college experience are also those who demonstrate higher levels of development in many areas" (Foubert & Grainger, 2006, p. 8).

Engagement

Engagement refers to the amount of time and effort students expend to become involved on campus and is grounded in theories of involvement (Kuh, 2005; Pascarella, 2005; Tinto, 1993). It is the student's effort to participate as well as the institutions commitment to offer programs in which to become involved that can enhance student learning. A student may be involved in an activity by attending weekly meetings, but to be truly engaged is another matter. Colleges and universities have a responsibility to engage students and to adapt to learning styles, as well as create a culture that welcomes all students and encourages and supports their engagement. "Specifically, it includes consideration of the institution's role in channeling students' participation in effective educational practice" (Kuh, 2009, p. 414).

The National Survey of Student Engagement (2007), a tool that collects data on college students since 2000, is constructed around five benchmarks which contribute to learning and personal development: Level of academic challenge, active and collaborative learning, student-faculty interaction, enriching educational experiences and supportive campus environment. The enriching educational experiences include activities such as internships, community service, foreign language skills, learning communities, campus encouragement to learn about others from different backgrounds and involvement in co-curricular activities such as a student organization. Overall, the NSSE presents data that supports the engagement of students in co-curricular activities, and shows that students who are more involved have increased opportunities for critical thinking and an opportunity to apply their knowledge. "In college, involvement in certain co-curricular activities is known to enhance and facilitate student success and persistence" (NSSE, p. 21).

For many students, an organization is the activity in which they may become more engaged on campus, gain critical thinking skills and build leadership. This

engagement helps to shape the climate on campus. Student organizations can become a tool for administrators to make the campus more welcoming for all students. A student group can be a central place where multiracial students find a sense of community and acceptance on campus.

Student Organizations

Student organizations provide activities in the form of Greek organizations, honor societies, intramural sports teams, traditional student activities committees, or groups tied to a major, interest or hobby. "Campus student organizations serve as significant social networks for students on college campuses and serve as important links for students to campus life and to the institution" (Kuk, 2010, p. 2). These student organizations can be a retention tool for universities who are attempting to retain students of color through various methods including special recruiting programs, revamped curriculum to become more inclusive, diversity training for faculty and staff and programs though multicultural services. Successful student organizations can assist in creating an environment which is more accepting and open to all students. For example, many race based student organizations host cultural events surrounding particular holidays. These activities enable the students to be exposed to a more diverse array of programs to attend, perhaps those they would never have had the chance to participate in at home. "Thus, students involved in a variety of activities acquire multiple points of view and perspectives that may encourage them to reevaluate their prior opinions of the world" (Gellin, 2003, p. 754).

Students involved in organizations may also increase their critical thinking skills, become more civically engaged in their communities and perform more community service than those who are not involved. Because students have to make an effort to find a group that is the right fit for them, their decision making as well as communication

skills are utilized. Students become officers of the organization, thus leadership skills are gained and enhanced by running meetings, dealing with conflict and budgeting and managing money.

Involvement in clubs and organizations may lead to critical thinking gains because undergraduates must make a conscious effort to seek out groups they are interested in and, therefore, may bring a high level of commitment to their involvement. This commitment level along with the sense of belonging that students find in these groups may lead to developing the abilities associated with critical thinking (Gellin, 2003, p. 754) "The goals and behavior of campus student organizations can promote or hinder the institution's efforts toward increasing the admission of diverse students on campus as well as their feelings of belonging and persistence once on campus" (Kuk, 2010, p. 5).

Campus Racial Climate

Racial and ethnic student organizations are a primary tool for engagement for first-year students of color because the campus environment can be viewed as hostile. For multiracial students, the layer of hostility may come from within a student group if the student is not readily accepted into the organization. Multiracial students may search for the right group to join, and for Black-White students, issues of not being "Black enough" or being asked "what are you" by other members of the group are common occurrences. Racial tension is "a configuration of external influences (historical and contemporary), structural characteristics of institutions and group relations and institutional ideologies" (Hurtado, 1992, p. 564). Students of color can perceive the campus environment to be a welcoming place or somewhere they may not feel accepted to thrive and grow. "Research has shown that students of color are attuned to the campus racial environment and experience it differently than their White counterparts at PWIs"

(Locks, Hurtado, Bowman & Oseguera, 2008, p. 262). Cabrera, Nora, Terenzini, Pascarella & Hagedorn (1999) found that exposure to a hostile climate directly affects African American commitment to the institution. Quantitative skills, analytical thinking, and appreciation of fine arts are dependent on positive interactions with faculty, staff and students. Eimers (2001) concluded colleges and universities must pay closer attention to minorities on campuses and create welcoming environments. Developing more inclusive environments has "special meaning" for predominately White campuses to make significant efforts in this arena (p.405). In order to give multiracial students the same well-rounded experience on campus as all others, including leadership opportunities, students must feel a sense of belonging and comfort to join a group. If the climate on campus is perceived as hostile for all students of color, multiracial students may get lost in that climate, leaving minimal chance to get involved in something at the university.

AFRICAN AMERICAN STUDENTS AND INVOLVEMENT

Tatum (1997) wrote about the importance of students of color grouping into student organizations and socializing together as a coping mechanism against racism (p. 62), in particular African Americans. For many racial minorities at predominately White institutions (PWI's), adjustment to campus is more than showing up to class. According to Harper (2009) additional challenges include

- campus climate;
- culturally exclusive environmental norms;
- overwhelming Whiteness;
- racial/ethnic organizations;
- academic preparation and
- utilization of campus support services (p. 181).

The experiences of African Americans at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) have been shown to be more positive than African American experiences at Predominately White Institutions (PWIs). "Overall, the existing research has suggested that African American students' experiences at HBCUs are more educationally beneficial than for African Americans at PWIs" (Nelson, et al., 2007, p. 42). Outcalt and Skewes-Cox (2002) attributed higher involvement for African Americans at HBCUs to an African American centered mission and student centered activities that catered to African American interests.

In class and out of class involvement is also important for African American students in terms of student development gains in understanding arts and humanities, personal and social development, understanding science and technology, thinking and writing skills and vocational preparation (Flowers, 2004, p. 648). Tinto (1993) stated that African American students may have a more difficult time adjusting to PWI's as their norms and values may be incongruent with the White majority. Tinto also believed that social integration among African Americans may be influenced by greater involvement in formal associations on campus, such as a student organization. In 2003, Guiffrida studied 88 African American students from a midsize PWI in the northeast. Results included that student organizations assisted the students in "establishing out-of-class connections with faculty, provided them opportunities to give back to other Blacks, and allowed them to feel comfortable by being around others perceived as like them" (p. 307).

Harper and Quaye (2007) studied 32 African American undergraduate men who were involved in campus organizations at 6 PWI's. Two major themes emerged by being engaged in a campus group including the importance of the advancement of the African American community and the development of cross-cultural communication skills which enabled the students to learn from different racial groups and advocate for other

disadvantaged communities. Harper and Quaye also connected their findings with that of Cross's model of Black identity development and the internalization stage. This stage "signifies an inner comfort with one's Blackness, the ability to form alliances with other members outside one's racial group, and a commitment to enacting change that will result in social justice for African Americans and other oppressed groups" (p.139). The participation in student organizations enabled the men to display the attitudes and behaviors consistent with Cross's model.

Museus (2008) found that ethnic student organizations provided a sense of cultural familiarity, or how students connect to others from similar backgrounds; vehicles for cultural expression in allowing students to express their ethnic identities; and advocacy and venues for cultural validation in which organizations provide a subculture in which students feel accepted and supported.

Multiracial students have been left out of the study of the engagement of students of color on campuses all together. Many multicultural centers that provide opportunities focus on monoracial students in their programming and events. If campuses have dedicated centers by race, the names inherently reflects the monoracial nature of their offerings. "ROSS (Racially Oriented Student Services) tend to simply assume that their students come from monoracial backgrounds, which in fact may or may not be true" (Literte, 2010, p. 131). These practices may result in biracial students becoming alienated from multicultural centers or race based organizations as the pressure to choose may become overwhelming for some multiracial students. Joint programming can be one way to model racial inclusiveness and continue relevance in the post-civil rights era (Literte, 2010). As little is actually known about students of color and their involvement on campuses, even less is known about multiracial students and organizations that may form around a mixed race identity. "Yet as these organizations become more prevalent,

staff, administrators and faculty are being asked to work with and advise them" (Johnston & Ozaki, 2008, p. 53). The outreach and engagement of multiracial students is only recently being explored. This study widened the literature about students of color and in particular, Black-White students, their engagement in student organizations and the effect on racial identity.

MULTIRACIAL COLLEGE STUDENTS

Exploring and understanding multiracial college students is a relatively new endeavor, with studies beginning in the 1990s and an explosion of research in the 2000s concentrating on understanding students of color on college campuses including those students who had a parent from more than one racial designation (Renn, 2000, 2003, 2004, 2008; Rockquemore & Brunsma, 2002, 2008; Wallace, 2001, 2004). Psychological, sociological and ecological models were developed for understanding multiracial college students (Kilson, 2001; Renn, 2003, 2004; Wijeyesinghe, 2001). The phenotype of multiracial students is a considerable factor in navigating campus spaces, what organizations they may join and if they are accepted (Root, 2003; Wallace, 2004).

Renn (2008) stated,

> The amount of cultural knowledge the student has is also a considerable factor in multiracial identity for college students. Depending on knowledge learned from parents, family, and community prior to college, multiracial students may arrive on campus with extensive cultural knowledge of their diverse backgrounds, much knowledge on one or two backgrounds but limited knowledge of others, or limited knowledge of any particular heritage background (Renn, 2008, p. 13).

Peer culture is also an important aspect which contributes to multiracial identity. Availability of a multiracial group of friends or student organization and pressure from monoracial students to adhere to one identity are areas which influenced multiracial college students' identities. "Considering not only the presence of various identity-based groups on campus but also the peer-supported ability to move among them is an example

of how prevailing thinking about racial identity development and peers can be made more applicable to understanding multiracial college students" (Renn, 2008, p. 19).

Overall, the study of multiracial college students to date provides a foundation of work surrounding identity and the influences which impact that identity. A wide body of research has been conducted on the importance of involvement for all students and the contribution to identity, for example the positive effects of group membership for African American students. Little is known about how student organizations can impact the identity of multiracial college students -- what they may choose to become involved in (for example a race based group) or the avoidance of certain types of groups, why, and the effects on identity for multiracial students. This study fills the gap in literature and contributes to the importance of student organizations on multiracial identity. Multiracial identity is formed and shaped in multiple ways, and incorporates many layers. Since 2000, a few relevant studies have been conducted on how multiracial identity may be formed. These include Renn who studied multiracial students and constructed patterns of identity; Wallace who also studied multiracial identity in the context of family, home, school and community; and two relevant dissertations, Harper who studied multiracial college students racial preferences over time via a national longitudinal study; and Chang-Ross who studied multiracial student identity through a critical ethnography including the students' positionality and the reactions of others to them. She also coined the term racial queer to describe empowerment and derogation or being outside of the margins in terms of racial identity.

These studies are relevant as they provide a foundation of research for practitioners which show that multiracial students need designated space to interact on campus and if mixed race students groups can form on a campus, administrators need to nurture and help the group grow. Counting students racially in a disaggregated manner is

also important for giving students the choice to designate more than one racial category (Harper, 2008). Multiracial identities are shaped by peer cultures (Renn, 2000) and families (Wallace, 2001) and are formed in complex and flexible ways (Wallace, 2001). Multiracial students often move between their identities depending on the situation (Renn, 2004) and are formed through the everyday interactions with those around them (Chang-Ross, 2010). With these studies as a foundation for how multiracial identities are formed, this study proposes to overlay the student organization as an additional lens or factor that also has the capacity to influence multiracial identity.

Renn

In 2000, Kristen Renn focused on multiracial college students and their development and interactions in the college environment. This new aspect of identity development was needed to address the unexplored questions of whether or how the college environment facilitates or inhibits the identity development of young people whose parents are of different federally defined races. Renn (2000) studied how multiracial students might see themselves in the context of higher education, focused on how campus peer culture influenced the ways in which they made meaning of their identity. Interactions with peers, involvement in activities and academic work influenced the creation of mixed race student groups, and shifts in language (e.g., including "multiracial" on applications) on some college campuses. Renn proposed that identity-based space is important, and if there is a critical mass of multiracial students, it is imperative that higher education administrators and faculty help create this space.

Renn (2003) continued her study of the 24 multiracial students by collecting data from an additional 14 students. She arranged the identities of the students into five non-exclusive patterns: two or more racial categories, situational identity, multiracial, one racial category, and opt out/deconstruct racial categories utilizing Bronfrenbrenner's

(1979) ecology model of development. Bronfrenbrenner's theory focuses on environmental influences on human development. This model was chosen because it incorporated both processes and outcomes in translating developmental theory to educational practice. Renn again looked at spaces on campus and peer culture. A limitation of Bronfrenbrenner's theory and Renn's study is they do not capture the evolution of identities across time. Renn found that "the model used provided a means to assess campus environments vis-a-vis racial identity and suggests areas where institutions could enhance opportunities for student learning and development" (p. 384). Improvements to educational practice include enhancing curricula to promote student identity development, aligning curriculum and co-curriculum to support new ways of thinking about identity and engaging peer culture to promote boundary crossing.

In 2004, Renn began a third study of multiracial students by interviewing 56 students. Five patterns of identity developed: monoracial identity, multiple monoracial identities, multiracial identity, extraracial identity and situational identity. Students moved between patterns frequently, depending on the situation, family, or friendships in which they were engaging.

Monoracial identity includes those students who some or all of the time identify with just one of their monoracial heritage groups. Twenty-seven students considered themselves monoracial. Family structures and perceptions (their own and others) of their level of cultural knowledge were important factors in identity. "They also described behaviors and attitudes depicting a variety of developmentally instigative characteristics, such as a propensity to persist in uncomfortable situations, to probe and explore identity, and to resist external categorization, that would contribute to identity formation" (Renn, 2004, p. 69). Having or lacking cultural knowledge, physical appearance, and personal characteristics related to the propensity to probe and explore the concepts of race and

racial identity, to resist or adopt external categorization, to persist in identifying privately and publicly in a variety of ways. Microsystems influenced their identities, such as studying abroad. Other such campus interactions which affected monoracial identity included academic, social and recreational microsystems such as requiring students to make family scrapbooks in a class, participating in campus programs or living with certain groups. "Students' experience and reading of campus peer cultures influenced which identities were available for them to claim publicly and, as important, which were desirable to claim in particular campus context" (Renn, 2004, p 70).

Multiple monoracial identity describes those students who held two or more racial backgrounds. Twenty-seven students in Renn's study identified as having distinct racial identities or a multiple monoracial person. Students identified with one heritage over the other at times, sometimes identified as multiracial, or held a situational identity. Students with multiple monoracial identity students seemed to move more easily among the campus groups than the multiracial students. The effects of peers often influenced their environment. In many cases, students who grew up with both parents present, one from each racial background, came to college with a strong sense of cultural knowledge. Many of the students were from immigrant families, or grew up in an international setting. They also found that their physical appearance influenced their acceptance into monoracial groups. Family microsystems supported some of the students' identifications with more than one heritage.

The label of multiracial was seen as a new construct by many of the students, and exhibited proudly. Eighty-nine percent of the students in the study identified as multiracial, mixed or biracial. Cultural knowledge played a very small part in this identity, as compared with monoracial or multiple monoracial identities. Physical appearance, however, played a huge role in their development. Looking too "White, not

White enough, or too ethnic" pushed many of the students to embrace the multiracial pattern. Gender was a large factor as well, particularly with the multiracial women in monoracial groups and situations. Exclusion from monoracial groups as well as exoticism were often brought up by the females in focus groups. Students often found they had to defend their identity, choose monoracial identities for academic purposes, or use their identity to educate others. Nonacademic settings, including participation in student organizations often provided the opportunity to identify as biracial or mixed for the first time. Personal relationships were sometimes a challenge as some students noted that monoracial people were not always interested in dating outside of their own groups, including multiracial students.

The extraracial identity was the least chosen among the students. Thirteen students in the study chose to be identified as extraracial, or as not identifying with race at all (raceless, transcendent). There were sharp distinctions by classification, as only 1 of 14 first-year students fit this identity pattern, yet 45% of juniors and 29% of seniors did so. The students resisted institutional, social and peer influences to identify in monoracial categories or on the border of biracial or multiracial. A substantial number of the students had some international experiences during childhood (9 of 56; 4 of these students were in the extraracial pattern). As an individual characteristic, self-labeling prompted several of the students into this pattern. Personally held beliefs about race and identity, and the belief that they could actually choose to not identify as anything, or check a box, was also a recurring theme.

Wallace

The experiences of multiracial students are shaped by their experiences at home and in the community. Wallace interviewed 15 high school and college students (2001) from various multiple race backgrounds. The work explores how these students

understand their racial identity across the various contexts of home, community, family and school. The interviews were conducted utilizing the Expressive Autobiographical Interview (EAI) technique through in depth ethnographic interviews. After the interviews, participants were presented with a series of four strategies for relating to different communities of heritage: home base/visitor's base; both feet in both worlds; life on the border; and shifting identity gears. Students were found to have a stable, mixed heritage frame of reference. Using this frame of reference, the students constructed their identities in multifaceted, complex and often open ended ways. "Mixed heritage students are finding ways to resist traditional identity discourses by crafting new ways and spaces in which to challenge them" (Wallace, 2001, p. 159).

Harper

In 2007, Harper studied mixed race students utilizing a mixed method with a national, longitudinal sample. Her study included 1,101 students with a quantitative survey and qualitative interviews with 10 UCLA students and used Omi and Winant's Racial Formation Theory (1994). The purpose of the research was to "discover whether and how students' racial designation preferences differed over time or across various written and verbal contexts in order to discover the personal and institutional characteristics and experiences associated with those differences" (C. Harper, 2007). Overall, the study supports a need for counting students with a disaggregated approach rather than a single race category as well as providing support for a closer examination of how race and ethnicity are counted and considered on college campuses. It also considers a multi-faceted approach to identity, taking into account the many aspects that are particularly salient for the student at that time. Race is a fluid concept, and Harper points to the ways in which a person's concept of race is influenced by a host of factors, and may perhaps be influenced by the time and place one is asked, the race of the person

asking the question and the concept the person holds of race at that particular place in time.

Harper also concluded that the eight factors of Wijeyesinghe's Factor Model of Multiracial Identity (2001) (racial ancestry, early experiences and socialization, cultural attachment, physical appearance, social and historical context, political awareness and orientation, spirituality and other social identities) emerged throughout her study and suggests a ninth category "college experiences and young adult socialization" (taking an ethnic studies course or living on campus) to extend the second FMMI factor of "early experiences and socialization". She suggests further research with the FMMI to determine if the eight factors are more influential for certain racial combinations than others. This study fills that call to action by looking at Black-White multiracial students and in particular, how student involvement in an organization can influence factors such as the perception of race. Race based student organizations can influence the concept of community and racial climate on campus. Harper's study does provide empirical evidence for the weight of certain factors over others as well as the influence of the time and place in which multiracial students are asked how they would choose to identify. This study furthers her research in also utilizing the FMMI, but also inserting a particular "filter" of influence, a student organization.

Chang

In 2010, Chang conducted a critical ethnography on multiracial college students at a large public institution. Her study included 25 semi-structured interviews (5 of which were turned into case studies), focus groups, observations of a multiracial student organization, field notes and document analysis. Her focus was on how the students experienced their racial identity, how they experienced identity in response to others reactions of them in everyday life and how their positionalities guided their behavior.

She utilized Holland's social practice theory of self and identity (Holland, Lachicotte Jr., Skinner, & Cain, 1998), Chicana feminist theory and queer theory. She also introduced the term racial queer in terms of multiraciality as it relates to empowerment and derogation. The purpose of the study was to show the agentic ways in which multiracial students come to racially identify. "The figured world of multiraciality is formed and re-formed with every new interaction with another sentient being, with the unique experiences of Multiracial individuals with diasporic racial combinations and in response to those that engage with them….." (Chang, 2010, p.381).

Chang's primary critique of Wijeyesinghe's Factor Model of Multiracial Identity (FMMI), which was this study's main coding method, is the lack of connection between the eight factors of multiracial identity and power, privilege and status. This study agrees with that critique and added intersectionality with the specific factors of power/choice as a level of coding. Chang gives the example of a multiracial person with Black, Asian and Latino backgrounds who "reads" as dark-skinned, perhaps seen as Black but chooses to identify as Asian. Wijeyesinghe's model does not take into account the social, political and cultural traits. Chang theorized that the Factor Model of Multiracial Identity does not account for the meaning in which the choice to identify as Asian accounts for and how much other's perceptions of a person also account for how he/she chooses to identify. Her study attempted to show "the ways in which the complexity and engagement of everyday interactions, as they happen, shape, recycle, change and define how Multiracial identity is formed" (Chang, 2010, p.92). Chang expanded the FMMI using Holland's social practice theory of self and identity to understand how students come to identify as they do.

This study examines the specific Black-White multiracial college student experience and how their identities are formed, utilizing the FMMI, overlaying how

involvement and other social identities explored in student organizations can shape the identity of these students. Renn, Wallace, Harper and Chang have all begun the study of multiracial students and how their identities are formed. Issues of family structures, situational identity, agency, and critical incidents are all important aspects and explore how identities are formed but do not delve into the influence of student organizations. Student groups play a significant role in many lives and help to mold the college experience. The unique pressures that multiracial students face make involvement opportunities even more critical. How identity is formed is critical piece in researching how Black-White students grow within the context of college.

IDENTITY THEORIES

Identities are shaped by a number of factors and can be fluid and constantly changing. It is important to include this section on identity theories as a means to understand how identities are formed. Gender, race, class, ability, and sexual orientation are some of the aspects that contribute to identity and how humans operate within social systems. "Within the student affairs literature, identity is commonly understood as one's personally held beliefs about the self in relation to social groups…and the ways one expresses that relationship" (Torres, 2009, p. 577). Indeed many of the facets of identity are socially constructed, shaped by our childhood, environment and community.

On college campuses, many experiences contribute to identity including living in residence halls, friendships, coursework, and involvement in student organizations. In order to fully explore identity, an examination of Erik Erikson's psychosocial development theory, Chickering's seven vectors of identity development and the Model of Multiple Dimensions of Identity will be utilized to explain how students develop over time, how issues may define them and their relationships with others and ultimately constructs their identities. There are other theories which also inform the formation of

identities. These include James Marcia's ego identity statuses (1966) which utilize Erikson's focus on the role of crisis in late adolescence. Marcia added exploration as a crisis involving the questioning of values and goals defined by parents; and commitment which attaches ownership to the goals. Josselson (1973) examined Marcia's theory by looking specifically at women and how they either resolve identity crisis or fail to move beyond the crisis. Other aspects of identity development include intellectual and ethical development (Perry, 1968) moral development (Gilligan, 1977; Kohlberg, 1969; Rest, 1986), cognitive structural theories including Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger & Tarule's (1986) women's way of knowing and Baxter Magolda's (1995) epistemological reflection and King and Kitchener's reflective judgment model (1981); Kolb's theory of experiential learning (1976); self-authorship (Kegan (Baxter Magolda, 1998; Kegan, 1982); faith and spirituality (Fowler, 1978; Parks, 1986); transition theory (Schlossberg, 1981), diversity development (Chavez, et al., 2003); and racial identity development (W. E. Cross, 1971, 1991; W. E. Cross, Fhagen-Smith, P., Vandiver, B., Worrell, F., 2002; W. E. Cross, Vandiver, B., Worrell, F., 2001; Gonzalez, 1997; Guiffrida, 2003; Helms, 1993; Helms, Jernigan, & Mascher, 2005; Inkelas, 2004; Phinney, 1990; Pope, 2000; Tinto, 1993). All of these aspects are an important beginning to explore how Black-White students view the intersections and the individual pieces of their identities.

Erik Erikson

Erik Erikson's (1968) psychosocial development theory is one of the first frameworks that traced the development journey from adolescence to adulthood. His eight stages of development occur in sequence from birth to late adulthood and suggest that identities constantly shift or become more refined. Each stage is distinguished by a crisis or turning point which leads to the next stage. In adolescents, the crisis of identity versus identity diffusion takes place. "Although Erikson's classic definition is useful,

recent theorists have referred to this process as identity exploration, rather than crisis" (Mercer, 2003, p. 217) . However, because Erikson's theory is linear, it does not take into account the fluidity of identity or the impact of race. Although critical incidents contribute to the definition of a person as Erikson's theory posits, for many people, not just students, identity is more fluid and can vacillate between aspects of identity. For multiracial students there is movement between multiple identities, particularly race and intersects with gender, sexual orientation, and class.

Chickering

Chickering (1969) created a seven vectors model of identity development, based on Erikson's theory (1968). In his first iteration of the theory, Chickering proposed a developmental model for college students in which they progressed in a fairly linear fashion. The experiences that students have on campuses affect where they are in the seven vectors. Reisser criticized the Chickering vectors, stating the theory was only developed from traditionally aged (18-24) students in small liberal arts colleges. In response, Chickering and Reisser (1993) re-conceptualized the vectors together, producing a deeper model of development: developing competence, managing emotions, developing autonomy, establishing identity, freeing interpersonal relationships, developing purpose, and developing integrity. They noted that vectors one through four most likely take place during the college years and that the gender of the student may also have an effect on the order of the vectors. The seven vector model from Chickering and Reisser presents a hierarchical progression through the stages, and does not offer a jump between stages or a move forward or back depending on environment (Barnes, 2005). However, Chickering and Reisser did acknowledge that students may deal with issues in different vectors simultaneously, the vectors could interact, and students could recycle issues from one vector in a periodic reexamination.

Chickering and Reisser argued that educational environments had a significant impact on student development and posed seven key influences that affected development, including programs and services and friendships and student communities. The applicability of Chickering's vectors to students of color has been questioned as well. "Attention to racial identity is crucial when attempting to facilitate psychosocial development of such students because the constructs are interrelated" (Pope as cited in Evans, Forney, Guido, Patton & Renn, 2010, p. 74). For multiracial students, the environment poses even greater flux on where in the seven vectors they may operate and which environmental factors apply. For example, the influence of friendships and communities may be an even greater environmental impact because multiracial students do not often find their place in monoracial groups very easily. "Some of the challenges include feeling pulled between various students-of-color organizations, feeling invisible, being bombarded with questions about racial identity, and feelings as if they do not have the cultural tools to appropriately navigate students-of-color spaces" (King, 2008).

MODEL OF MULTIPLE DIMENSIONS OF IDENTITY

The model of multiple dimensions (MMI) developed by Jones and McEwen (S. R. Jones, & McEwen, M.K., 2000) provided one of the first models which examined relationships between multiple points of social identities (race, class, gender etc). The model is based on ten undergraduate women of diverse racial and cultural backgrounds and also considers the context in which identities are shaped, such as family influence, sociocultural conditions, current experiences and career decisions. Based on Abes and Jones (2004) study of lesbian identity development, Abes, Jones and McEwen (2007) reworked the model to consider meaning making in the MMI.

Those persons with the ability to understand meaning making and how context shaped their identities had a greater understanding of their identity and how it is

influenced by various factors. The model provides one look at how students may see their identities, being fluid rather than predictable as compared to the models of Erikson (1968) and Chickering (1969). The model is grounded in queer theory (Butler, 1991; Tierney & Dilley, 1998) with the assumption that the core sense of self is always evolving and repeating enactments of identity essentially shape the identity. MMI influences researchers such as Wijeyesinghe (2001) and her factor model of multiracial identity (FMMI) covered further in this chapter under multiracial identity theories. The MMI is a useful tool in beginning to examine experiences, contexts and intersections which shape how multiracial students might view their own racial identities. However, multiracial persons have even more layers to consider when forming their own healthy identities, including two or more cultural backgrounds and familial relationships to consider.

In order to delve further into the topic of racial identity, understanding the social construction versus the biological construction is a useful place to begin. The debate alternates between the historical, political and economic construction of race; and race being purely attributed to biology. The foundation of this debate goes back into early history and affects those who are of two or more racial backgrounds. Historical contexts include the one-drop rule (having one-drop of Black blood makes a person Black), and the 1967 Loving vs. Virginia case which overturned the rule that people of different races could not marry. The last state to repeal interracial marriage was Alabama in the year 2000, thirty-three years after the 1967 case. The contribution of this history forms the base for the acceptance of mixed people into modern society.

BIOLOGY VERSUS SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF RACE

The social construction of race is a complex concept and provides a further explanation of race as a social identity. For those researching the multiracial population,

this notion becomes even more complicated. According to Zack (1998, p. 1), "race is a distinct biological category of human beings who were not all members of the same family but who shared inherent physical and cultural traits that were different from those shared within other races". Casas defined ethnicity "as a group classification of individuals who share a unique social and cultural heritage [customs, language, religion, and so on] passed on from generation to generation" (as cited in Helms, 1993, p. 4).

Researchers such as Root (2003) and Daniel (2002) approach race as socially constructed with the firm belief that racism exists in our society. This approach recognizes the biological categories, yet positions them as purely socially constructed through political, economic and social means. Zack (1998) states that maintaining social categories implies that there are innate differences between the members of the groups; otherwise there would be no reason to create the groups. Bonam, et.al (2007) suggest that multiracial individuals de-emphasize the biological construction of race, and this de-emphasis may also protect them from stereotypes. Individuals have a choice to not use the biological categories which may be unclear in regards to multiracial individuals or to utilize stereotypes to continue to place persons in those categories. Others (Faucher, 2005) suggest that humans learn the concept of social construction through racial cognition, "through cognitive mechanisms whose function is to commit us to respect the norms of our own ethnie" (or tribe), which recognizes both the biological and social concepts of race and attempts to merge them together, suggesting that both are important. Spencer (2006) argues against social construction in relation to multiracial identity, stating that one must embrace biological definitions of race if multiracialism is true. Socially defined races inherently cannot exist if one is to categorize mixed race people. Osei-Kofi (2010) argues that if race is socially constructed, this construction is built on a power dynamic which clearly places White people at the top of the hierarchy. The

continued exploration of multiracial identity reinforces biological race, making null the argument for social construction. Including multiracial students in racial categories racializes the entire group. The concept of race is still at the center of the categorization. Osei-Kofi states that placing identity as the crux of the research on multiracial people is problematic because it does not get to the heart of the issue, which is the racial hierarchy itself.

Studying the concept of multiraciality, even assigning persons the term "multiracial" adds one more category, essentially reproducing biological construction. How does one exactly categorize a group of people with multiple experiences, heritages and histories into one lump multiracial category? Does multiraciality continue to perpetuate difference? What role does power play? However, one needs to consider the world in which we live, and how the social construction of race shapes most of it. If colleges and universities adopted the philosophy to change the racial hierarchy through for example, eradicating culture centers, a disservice is done in the preparation of students to graduate and operate in future careers. Although the idea of changing the racial hierarchy is ideal, it is also idealist at best. This section informs the study in regards to understanding the different lenses through which race is viewed. A more thorough background provides potential solutions for colleges and universities to work more closely with Black-White students, and examines whether fully pursuing the addition of "multiracial" to the multitude of places race is used (multicultural centers, admissions offices etc) or to pursue eradicating all race categories as a better solution. These three different theoretical frameworks which attempt to define race provide a foundation in which to ground varying approaches to the of study multiraciality.

The social constructivist approach

Race plays an important role today by dividing people into groups and often attaching other social aspects to that grouping (stereotypes, political power, economics, health, etc). Maintaining that race is socially constructed allows race to become a more fluid concept, rather than attached to the human biological makeup. Classifications of race can differ for a person day to day, in a certain situation and in fact have changed with history and census categories. Bonam, Sanchez, Shih & Peck (2007) propose a heightened awareness of the social construction of race comes from the experiences children have during their childhood, particularly what children learn as racist behaviors and stereotypes of others. The social categories of race are reinforced by stereotypes attached to them. One can disregard the categories or use the stereotypes to distinguish between them. The research of Bonam et. al (2007) suggests that multiracial people often choose to ignore the groupings of persons by race and this act provides a protective function from racial stigmatization.

Zack (1998) asserts "If it were true that being Black, White, Asian or Indian caused human beings to have the types of physical traits they do, then there ought to be some physical marker for race, apart from those traits, that scientists can identify" (p.2). Indeed, there is not an actual physical marker, or gene that points to a separation of the races. However, the biological concept of race cannot be ignored, but perhaps can be pushed closer to the idea of the social construction through cognitive approaches to studying race.

The biological approach

The biological approach to race determines there are distinct categories dictated by genetic makeup. They are inherently different and thus when blended together, do indeed make up a mixed race. Spencer (2006) proposes either racial categories be

embraced or abandoned to truly understand the concept of multiraciality. The real research, Spencer suggests, is in the notion that race is not actually a social reality, it is the belief in race as a social reality that is the fundamental concept. If research on multiraciality continues, the concept of race needs to be recognized as biological, or abandoned altogether. "We can study why people think they are multiracial without accepting that they are actually multiracial" (Spencer, 2006, p. 119).

The cognitive and evolutionary approach

The cognitive and evolutionary approach to the construction of race blends biological and social aspects. This theory provides an interesting way of thinking about both theories. The cognitive and evolutionary approach purports to answer the question of how race is socially constructed (Faucher, 2005).

Machery and Faucher (2005) propose that humans are composed of multiple bands or tribes of people across the continents. These tribes break down into smaller groupings or ethnies which share language, culture, beliefs and norms. Humans have the cognitive ability to adapt to these factors of our ethnie or racialist cognition. "Folk biology" provides ways of knowing about culture and the ability to adapt. The concept of race is culturally transmitted to our children, consistent with social constructivism. However, the cognitive and evolutionary approach suggests we learn concepts of race based on our folk biology (ways of knowing and adapting), or why humans think about social concepts in biological terms. This theory attempts to bring social and biological bodies of work together in order to explain both approaches to studying race. It also provides an interesting place for multiraciality to be studied. The social construction of

thought places race as irrelevant, thus providing a space for multiracial people to identify as they wish such as in Renn's (2004) multiracial identity theory (monoracially, multiracially, situationally, extraracially) and the biological approach says multiraciality is a true melding together of two distinct races. Race is one aspect of identity.

RACIAL IDENTITY

Racial identity "refers to the dimension of a person's overall self-concept that is grounded in his or her experiences as a member of a broad racial group" (Wallace, 2001, p. 35). There is a body of literature and research which focuses on racial identity in terms of race relations and experiences and address White and Black identities specifically (Helms, 1993, 2005; Cross 1971, 1991, 2001, 2002; Phinney, 1990) and has been utilized by college practitioners to better understand the student population. In addition, studies have narrowed the focus on racial identity and college students and included how racial identity affects student involvement (Chavez, 2003; Gonzalez, 1997; Guiffrida, 2003; Inkelas, 2004: Pope, 2000; Tinto, 1993). White identity.

White identity

White racial identity development is a growing area of research. Many authors have written on the system of racism and the role that Whites play within it (Dyer, 1997; Helms, 1993, 1996; Helms, et al., 2005; Jensen, 2005; Tatum, 1997; Wise, 2007).

Carter (1990) conducted the first empirical study on the influence of White racial identity on racism which found that males and females differed significantly on their racial identity attitudes. Helms (1993) proposed a linear model in which White people progress through six stages. The model presents the development of White identity by abandoning racism and privilege and accepting a new, non- racist White identity. The six stages include: contact, in which the person denies or ignores racial information. The

second stage is disintegration, involving questioning racial beliefs. Third, reintegration occurs by resolving the dissonance of the second stage by reasserting White authority. Fourth, pseudo-independence examines how racism is perpetuated by White people. Fifth, immersion-emersion involves an internal search for racial beliefs. And sixth, autonomy evolves by analyzing the complexity of race.

Hardiman (2001) suggests new directions for White identity development including examining how Whites feel, think and reflect upon their Whiteness and how they might relate to people of other races. Carter, Helms and Juby (Carter, Helms, & Juby, 2004) studied 279 White participants using Helms's (1996) racial identity profile scale and found that the flat, or undifferentiated profile scored significantly higher in racist attitudes than participants with other racial identity profiles. In other words, no particular racial identity was salient but could mean that exposure to certain racial identities were not prevalent, limited socialization was present regarding race or the participants psychological resolutions surrounding race were not yet present as many were college-age. "Because they represent the societal norm, Whites can easily reach adulthood without thinking much about their racial group" (Tatum, 1997, p. 93).

Miville, Darlington, Whitlock and Mulligan (2005) studied 300 White college students and found issues of gender were more predominant in resolving identity concerns than racial issues. They also suggest campus programming should center on the intersection of multiple identities, rather than focusing on one identity at a time, such as diversity of race. White male college students could benefit in particular from programs which help them recognize how dimensions of their identities can reflect each other in positive ways, such as discussions around gender discrimination and the intersection with racism.

According to Wolfe-Taylor (2008),

> At a predominantly White institution, White college students may be able to largely exist without ever critically examining their race and the implications associated with their race. Without an understanding of their race, White students are less likely to be aware of the privileges associated with Whiteness as well. The ability to be oblivious to one's race is a luxury that White people have. (Wolfe Taylor, 2008)

The intersection of ethnicity and race for Whites is another area where further research can be accomplished. "The White person who has worked through his or her own racial identity process has a deep understanding of racism and an appreciation and respect for the identity struggles of people of color" (Tatum, 1997, p. 113). White identity research is an interesting aspect of exploring biracial Black-White students in the application of one part of their identity. A further question surrounds how White identity affects the multiracial Black-White person. Relevant to all aspects of identity for Black-White multiracial people is how and if they prefer to identify as White. Black identity theory is also another important piece to further explore as a part of the Black-White identity. The Black identity is rooted in social and historical contexts such as the one-drop rule, the Loving vs. Virginia case, and the 2000 census.

One-drop rule

During the 19th and early 20th centuries, American racial ideology determined race to be biologically determined. "The property interests of slaveholders and the social priorities of Jim Crow racism are central to the principle of hypodescent" (Hollinger, 2005, p. 20). Hypodescent is the concept that one drop of Black "blood" other than White blood makes on automatically a person of color. The intermarriage of persons from different racial categories was also against the law in many states, until very recently (2000) Alabama still had this law on their books. "Between 1960 and 2000, the number of Black-White marriages increased six-fold, and unions between White and

members of other racialized groups grew even more dramatically" (Holt, 2006, p. 1). A growing number of social and physical scientists later argued that race is determined more by social contexts as there is greater difference within racial categories than between them. Fractional classifications also existed in state governments and on the Census such as octoroon, quadroon and mulatto. Mulatto was dropped from the census after 1920. In 1924, Virginia's miscegenation statute stated that in order to be classified as White, one must not have any other blood other than Caucasian. Miscegenation laws, slavery and hypodescent perpetuated the status of African Americans status in America as one of lower social and economic class.

Hollinger (2005) stated,

> Even if light skinned Blacks had sometimes experienced a less consistently brutal style of discrimination than that experienced by the darkest of African Americans, there was no doubt that any person perceived as having any Black ancestry whatsoever was rightly included in the antidiscrimination remedies developed in the last 1960s and early 1970s. (Hollinger, 2005, p. 21)

Because of the one-drop rule, or hypodescent, to be considered White in this country, a person must have only White ancestors (Renn, 2004). The concept of multiracial is difficult for those who would want purity of the races. As a result, mixed-race people experience oppression in ways similar to other non-White people (Root, 1992; Zack, 1998). "It (multiracial identity) does, however challenge essentialist and reductionist notions of race and de-centers racial categories that originate in the dominant Eurocentric paradigm by pointing to the ambiguity and multiplicity of identities" (Daniel, 2002, p. 11).

The construction of a multiracial identity rejects the notions of race based on the one-drop rule and pushes the boundaries of a new racial consciousness that can move and include multiple racial categories. F. James Davis (1991) points out that the one-drop rule has become such a part of the American fabric that many are unaware of its

oppressive origins and why one might have the notion that half of any racial category would mean the whole of the person. "In the United States, multiracial individuals of African American and European American ancestry for the most part have internalized the one-drop rule and have identified themselves as Black" (Daniel, 2002, p. 49). Harris and Sim found that when Black-White youth live in the South, they are significantly less likely to select White as their best single race. "Given that the one-drop rule was born in the South and until fairly recently carried the weight of the law in that region, it is not surprising that so few southern Black-White youth claim to be White" (Harris, 2002, p. 623).

Black identity

During the Civil Rights movement, W.E. Cross Jr. (1971) began to explore Black racial identity development with the Racial Identity Scale (RIS). It remains one of the seminal works in understanding minority populations for practitioners and researchers in counseling, psychotherapy, and student development. A primary reason for the continued use of the original Cross theory is its association with the scale. "The development of the Racial Identity Attitude Scale made Nigrescence theory more accessible for practical and research applications" (Cross, Fhagen-Smith, Vandiver, Worrell, 2002, p. 71). Nigrescence is utilized as a term for "becoming Black." The original scale included stages in which a Black person accepted being Black and had high self-esteem as a result. Those who accepted the values of a White society had lower self-esteem.

Five identity stages characterized the process: Pre-Encounter, Encounter, Immersion-Emersion, Internalization-Commitment:

Stage 1, Pre-Encounter, describes Black individuals whose identity is based on mainstream values. Pre-Encounter Blacks adopt a pro-White identity and an anti-Black

stance. Blacks in this stage are believed to be self-hating, resulting in low self-esteem, impaired personality, and a poor mental health functioning. In the Encounter stage, Blacks experience an episode or series of events that lead them to question their belief about the role of race in American society. Immersion-Emersion takes Blacks from the old identity to a new one. Individuals immerse themselves in Black culture to the point of romanticizing it. A strong Black identity is born. Emersion results in another reevaluation process. Individuals become emotionally calmer and rationally examine their experiences and identity. Internalization describes the intellectual and emotional acceptance of being Black. Internalization-commitment takes Black self-acceptance one step further into activism (Vandiver, 2001, p. 72).

In 1991, Cross revised the model to separate group identity from individual identity and no longer related self-esteem to racial identity. The stages no longer represented identities, rather the theme of the stage itself and are reduced from five to four: Pre-Encounter, Encounter, Immersion-Emersion and Internalization. In 2001, Cross and Vandiver revised the model again. The Pre-encounter stage includes three identities: Assimilation, Miseducation and Self-Hatred. Miseducation represents Blacks who have a negative view of the Black community and self-hatred describes those who view themselves negatively because of their race and have low self-esteem. Cross and Fhagen-Smith (2002) further developed the model to include a life span approach fusing Erikson's identity development with Black identity which provides a comprehensive look at Nigrescence Pattern A (infancy, childhood, pre-adolescence and adolescence) Nigrescence Pattern B (Black identity development as a conversion experience) and Nigrescence Pattern C (Black identity expansion, continued growth, or recycling across lifespan). The revised model takes into account the existence of multiple modes of

identity, allows growth and movement between patterns, allows low race saliency as a mode of identity and examines institutional racism (Cross, 2002, p. 268). The revised model is relevant to many theories of identity including gay and lesbian research and other racial identity theories (Asian, Latino, multiracial).

Another theory that also explores Black identity is Jackson's Black Identity Development (2001). There are five stages of development or consciousness: (1) Naïve, the absence of social consciousness or identity (2) Acceptance, suggesting the acceptance of the prevailing White majority description and perceived worth of Black people, culture and experience (3) Resistance, the rejection of the dominant culture (4) Redefinition, the renaming, reaffirming and reclaiming of a sense of Black culture and (5) Internalization, the integration of a redefined racial identity into all aspects of one's identity.

Understanding Black and White racial identity and the history through which people of color have lived to this time is crucial to developing a clearer picture of those who are of more than one race. Multiracial people, especially those who are Black-White, have a unique set of backgrounds in which to discover their own identity. Black-White people may experience some of Cross or Jackson's Black identity stages, as well as simultaneously experience Helms White identity stages. They may have situational identity issues when in certain communities coupled with other social aspects such as gender or sexual orientation. Paired with the history of the social construction of race and how others may view them when entering a room, equals a different set of circumstances than many have faced.

Multiracial identity

The 1990s brought new theories on multiraciality (Poston, 1990; Root, 1998), as the population identifying with more than one race was increasing. The model of biracial

identity development provided the first look at how mixed race persons formed their identities and offers a foundation for exploring Black-White college students.

Poston

Poston (1990) presented the first model of biracial identity development. Based on the past models of racial identity which focused on monoracial people (Cross, 1971; Parham & Helms, 1985), Poston suggested that these models were not as applicable to biracial individuals and needed to take a more positive approach to biracial identity development. Poston's model included five stages of biracial identity development, which more directly addressed the issues through which mixed race children were progressing. The model is based on the assumptions that biracial individuals are influenced by multiple factors including peer and parental pressure, may experience alienation, lower self-esteem and guilt based on these choices, and experience racial identity differently than monoracial young people. The five stages include:

(1)Personal identity. This stage includes biracial youth becoming familiar with their membership in particular racial and ethnic groups. The personal identity is based on self-esteem and self-worth which are learned in the family. (2) Choice of group categorization. Individuals at this stage are pushed to choose an identity either as a biracial person or choose one parent's race over the other. A biracial identity is most likely not a likely choice as children in this stage are considered to be less cognitively developed to think about making this choice. Factors influencing the choice include: status (peers, neighborhood, group status of parent's racial background); social support (parental style and influence, acceptance by family); personal (language, culture, physical appearance). (3) Enmeshment/denial. Young people at this stage are faced with a confusion and guilt at having to choose one race over the other. They may also feel a lack of acceptance from peers. Parental and community support are key in this stage as a

way of helping the young person appreciate both aspects of their racial identity. (4) Appreciation. Individuals in the appreciation stage begin to value all aspects of their racial backgrounds. However, they still typically identify with one race over another. (5) Integration. This stage includes persons who have a clear sense of their racial identities and feel secure in who they are (pp.153-154).

Poston's theory provided counselors with added knowledge in addressing the needs of biracial youth. The model presented the first work on assisting counselors and parents with the tools needed to work with a young biracial population. However, it does not take into account that young biracial youth may vacillate between stages, may reach a healthy multiracial identity, may never reach the integration stage, or experience different stages depending on environment.

Ecological framework

Root (1998) developed an ecological framework for understanding racial identity which suggested family, community, gender, and personality all operate within a generational lens. Ecological theories are models which examine relationships, networks or webs of factors which may contribute at any time to a person's identity. Root claimed the shift of generations was directly affecting the acceptance level of multiracial people because in 2003, the older population had lived through Civil Rights, segregation and racial tensions. The current generation was experiencing a shift as they were living in a society which was more accepting to people of different racial backgrounds, thus, multiracial people were finding a more positive environment in which to explore their identities and to embrace having more than one race. Root outlined four types of identity resolution (2003) for multiracial persons that could change over time depending on the environment, community, family and other life experiences:

(1) Accept the monoracial identity society assigns of which the one-drop rule has primary determinacy. A person is born into this identity and does not change it. (2) Actively choose a single identity. The choice may be affected by the environment in which the person lives, family (absence or presence of a monoracial parent who influences the choice), political reasons, or how one was raised. (3) Choose a mixed identity which may be more likely now than in the past due to a presence of more multiracial persons, an increase in more celebrities and a president who is mixed race. There also may be more acceptance by friends and family surrounding the mixed race person. (4) Multiracial people can choose a "new race" identity which may be a blended, multiracial or mixed. Identity resolution is a little bit more difficult to understand given our cultural knowledge of race in America. However, Root provides the example of the Hispanic category on the Census and the identification of 42.2% choosing "other" in the racial identification section.

Root added a fifth category in 2000 during the biracial sibling project - choose a White identity. Several students in the project chose White because of isolation from people of color in his/her family or community, and because they were surrounded mostly by White people in their experiences. Other young people in the Project had family dysfunction, particularly with the parent of color and thus were propelled into the White parent's identity.

Root's theory (2000) introduced the idea of a multiracial identity, that mixed people may self-identify with more than one race and they could also move fluidly between identities. The theory provided a place for non-linear models of multiracial identity. However, she was not able to provide in-depth research on the contexts for choosing their identities.

Daniel

In 2002, Daniel argued that the Black-White biracial dynamic is different than other blends of race which include European descent because of the presence of the one-drop rule, or hypodescendency. The one-drop rule states that any Black blood inherently makes the person Black.

Generally speaking, however, successive generations of individuals whose blended lineage has included a particular background of color, along with European American ancestry, have not invariable been designated exclusively, or even partially as members of that groups of color if the background is less than one-fourth of their lineage. (Daniel, 2002, p. 13)

In 2002, Daniel presented three identities for African American/White biracial people, stating that the multiracial identity is slightly different for African American and White biracial individuals: synthesized identity, functional identity/European American and functional identity/African American identity all influenced by peers, family and society.

(1) Individuals in the synthesized integrative identity identify with both African American and White communities equally. They are able to navigate between communities, yet maintain affinity for African American issues. The synthesized pluralistic identity references those who feel comfortable in African American and White communities, as well as multiracial settings and maintain affinities for African American and multiracial issues. Both synthesized identities embrace their "Blackness" and "Whiteness." These individuals also are more likely to view themselves as the "new multiracial generation." (2) Individuals in the functional integrative/European American orientation feel most comfortable in White social settings and feel more accepted by other multiracial people or by Whites. (3) Individuals in the functional

integrative/African American orientation feel most comfortable in Black social settings and in the Black community.

The primary difference between those in a synthesized identity and those experiencing a functional identity is that the latter place more emphasis on race. However, there are many intersections for the identity of people in all the aforementioned categories: gender, sexual orientation, age. Daniel presents the model of Black-White identity as a method of creating a new multiracial identity that resists hypodescendency. The importance of recognizing those biracial individuals with a Black parent and a White parent is that the multiracial identity differs from those African Americans who for the most part have multiple racial backgrounds but one social identity – Black or African American. Those with the new multiracial identity feel a sense of kinship or at least recognition that they have multiple racial backgrounds and are not forced to choose one over the other. College is one place where the opportunity to experiment, join different groups and move between identities may be easiest. How multiracial college students may experience that opportunity can depend on the campus environment and the chance to explore by becoming involved.

FRAMEWORK FOR CURRENT STUDY

The factor model of multiracial identity (FMMI) was developed by Wijeyesinghe (2001) from a qualitative study of African American/White biracial adults. The FMMI is different than stage models of multiracial identity in that it takes into account factors that may affect identity and does not assume a person progresses from one stage to the next. The model assumes that the identity is not already assigned, and examines how people make choices. The FMMI was chosen for this study because of the fluidity of factors that make up the process of racial identity, and allow for additional factors such as college experiences, student organizations and power/choice. It also views how people make

meaning of their choices in relation to their experiences, which the participants did when choosing a student organization, sometimes based on the conversations about race with their parents or how accepted they felt in certain situations. The eight factors affecting identity can all be experienced at once or not at all and are arranged in the model around the center of choice of racial identity, instead of progressing through linear stages.

The factors are:

- racial ancestry
- cultural attachment;
- early experience and socialization;
- political awareness and orientation;
- spirituality;
- social and historical context;
- physical appearance;
- other social identities;

Racial ancestry is one of the largest parts of the FMMI, because it is reflective of the family tree. "Racial ancestry, defined as the racial groups reflected in an individual's ancestors, is discussed first because for many people, being Multiracial and having a Multiracial identity are matters of family tree" (Wijeyesinghe, 2001, p. 138). Regardless of a monoracial or multiracial identity, the racial identity of a child is often determined by what the parents decide (Wijeyesinghe, 2001, p. 138).

Cultural attachment refers to the aspects of culture to which a multiracial person is exposed in childhood and adulthood. These may be cultural experiences from multiple racial backgrounds or only one. The cultural attachment can affect how a multiracial person may identify as an adult but other factors, such as phenotype or the current situation might influence how he/she identifies. For example, a Black-White female

college student might participate in an African American sorority because her mother or aunt were members. However, she may not be a member of any other Black student organization, but choose to be a member of the multicultural group on campus.

Early experiences and socialization often provide multiracial children with overt and subtle cues about their racial identities including language spoken at home, celebration of certain holidays, food, music and interactions with members of extended family. Parents often assign racial identities to their children at a young age (Wijeyesinghe, 2001) and other family, community and social institutions can also affect a child's racial identity. Some multiracial people retain that identity and others change it later in adulthood when they may have more political awareness, take courses in college around certain racial identities or have more mature, in depth conversations about their race and racial identity. If a Black-White child was raised in an all-Black community, he might always identify as Black until her gets to college and takes his first course on African American History. Learning about all aspects of his racial background, he may choose to reject his White identity completely. Harper (C. Harper, 2007) proposed an additional category "college experiences and young adult socialization" which would explore what students learn about their racial identity from their time spent in college.

Political awareness and orientation place race, racism and racial identity in a larger historical, political economic and social context. Claiming a particular identity can make a political statement for some multiracial persons. If a student grew up in a primarily White community as a Black-White male child, going to college and joining only Black organizations may make a statement that these are the preferred groups for him because there were not many Black groups available back at home. He may only call himself a Black man and perhaps not even tell anyone that he is a multiracial person.

Only when one Black parent and one White parent show up for Family Weekend on campus does the issue ever come up with his friends.

Spirituality is defined by the FMMI as "the degree to which individuals believe in, seek meaning from, or are guided by a sense of spirit or higher power" (Wijeyesinghe, 2001, p. 143). Related to racial identity development, spirituality can provide a sense of grounding or the ability to derive greater meaning from their religious views. For example, a Black-White female may be struggling with her multiracial identity on a predominately White campus and feel pressure from her Black friends to choose her Black identity. Their trips as a group off campus to a Black Baptist church every Sunday pressures her to identity only as a Black female and later in graduate school, feel more confident to express her identity as a mixed woman.

The social and historical context refers to the social responses to issues of race, racism, interracial relationships and history. The one-drop rule is an example of the history upon which the social construction of race is based. The one-drop rule in the early 19th and 20th centuries stated that one-drop of Black blood classified a person as Black. It not only applied to Blacks but also other socially identified "minorities" – Asians, Native Americans, and Latinos. The Census 2000 was the first opportunity for multiracial people to make more than one federally defined racial category on the census. This social and historical context still has lasting effects on Black-White people, although they have the ability to mark all applicable races on the census, physical appearance and social pressures often make it difficult to identify other than Black. The term multiracial is also a relatively new word in the social fabric of our American history.

Wijeyesinghe (2001) stated,

> As a result of the growing number of Multiracial people, increases public awareness of their issues, and an emerging Multiracial movement, Multiracial people born during the 1980s and 1990s have greater options for claiming carious racial identities, including a Multiracial identity. (Wijeyesinghe, 2001, p. 141)

Physical appearance, or phenotype, such as skin color, hair texture, eye color, shape and size of facial features and body structure are often visible "cues" to how a multiracial person is perceived by others. How one appears physically can often be a challenge for those who are Black-White but identify or appear as White, or may desire to fit into the Black community but may experience rejection. Physical appearance is one of the biggest factors in racial identity (Chang-Ross, 2010; C. Harper, 2007; Harris, 2002; Renn, 2004; Wijeyesinghe, 2001). For example, a Black-White female shows up at her first meeting of the Black Student Union and is asked by a member at the reception following meeting, "So, what are you?". This scenario happens repeatedly for multiracial people, by various people they encounter, in various situations regardless of the racial background of the person or group.

Other social identities include gender, ability, sexual orientation, socioeconomic class and ethnicity. This area represents a large portion of multiple identities that can affect how one feels about their own race. It needs to be expanded upon, or perhaps have the specific pieces not collapsed into "other social identities". Intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1991) explores these multiple crossings of different identities and does not assume one part takes precedence over another. Intersectionality allows for a person to be in a position of power and privilege with certain identities and also inhabit one of simultaneous subordination. A Black-White student could be from a privileged economic class, attended a private college prep high school and not think too much about being a Black male. When he arrives on campus he finds that others perceive him first and foremost as a Black male, assume he is not from a quality high school and has his math professor assumes he would need remediation in a freshmen calculus class.

Many of the eight factors are related and view identity in constant flux. The model provides a useful tool for counselors and advisors working with multiracial people

to determine which of the aspects of identity may be most relevant, and which are not. However, the model does not present a complete picture of multiracial identity in that there may be other factors also represented (gender, sexual orientation, ability, etc). It also does not take into account how much weight the factors have for different people nor make a connection to power, privilege and agency as critiqued by Chang (Chang-Ross, 2010) . The FMMI is a valid starting point in looking at multiracial identity, and moves beyond stage models. Harper (2007) added another factor with college experiences and young adult socialization. This addition was very helpful in coding for these experiences and validating the inclusion of the category. A student organization can influence all eight of the factors in choice of racial identity. For example, multiracial students often find physical appearance an issue when showing up for a monoracial student group. Spirituality may affect which group the student chooses to join over another. The student may learn more about Black history in a course and choose to join the Black Student Union over a multicultural fraternity. A speaker that an organization brings may provide insight for the student on political awareness and later shape her run for office back in her community. This study examines the student's choice of student organization.

The FMMI was utilized in this study by coding for the eight factors. For example, when participants told stories about their childhood, or specific instances of feeling subordinated on campus, the sentences were highlighted and coded using Envivo software. Later the factors were able to be reviewed according to the category and analyzed for themes.

INTERSECTIONALITY

Important to identity is the concept of intersectionality, which explores aspects of multiple dimensions of identity through power dynamics, inequality and larger social structures (Abes, Jones & McEwen, 2007). Intersectionality is an analytical lens which

considers gender, race, ability, sexuality, class and age and grew out of critical legal studies and literature on the experiences of women of color (e.g., Crenshaw 1990; hooks, 1984).

Jones (2009) stated,

> Intersectional research and analysis breaks out of the boundaries of traditional student development research by exploring the complexities of the lived experience that rarely fall into neat categories and by situating individuals within the structures of power and oppression that influence the lived experience. (S. R. Jones, 2009, p. 289).

It is a useful tool in student affairs because it examines issues from a number of angles and does not assume that one identity takes precedence over another. For example, in looking at student organizations, one identity should not shape all experiences for the students involved, such as a group based on only race. There are a number of intersections which apply to students engaged in the organization, including gender, sexuality, and age which deepens the experience of those involved in the group if taken into consideration. Those students in an African American focused group could also conduct programs which go beyond only racial identity to examine being Black and female, or Black and gay.

Intersectionality can be utilized to research multiracial students because it provides a lens to explore many aspects of mixed student identity, in particular the intersection of race with issues such as class and gender. With Wijeyesinghe's factor model of multiracial identity (2001), intersectionality also adds power dynamics and oppressed identities and considers that individuals can inhabit both an oppressed and a privileged identity, which many multiracial people often do. Students navigate these multiple spaces through becoming involved on campus. Their experiences on college campuses help to shape how they view themselves and the larger world in which they exist.

In this study, the intersection of both the Black and White race for the participants is in itself a complicated space to inhabit. Whether students chose to connect with their Blackness, Whiteness or multiraciality sometimes depended on the situation that they were in, and sometimes the choice was made for them. Phenotype was a large factor for entry or denial into Black or White communities. Some participants discussed not wanting to go to an all Black meeting on their own without a friend. That Black friend helped them gain acceptance into the room, where they could then participate in the meeting and could be seen as "legitimate". In White communities or organizations, the participants were seen as the person of color because of their phenotype, not as another White student. They faced a different set of rules for entry into these meetings, not as difficult as the Black organizations to enter the room alone, but still always viewed as the "brown one" or the "other". In either case, the choice on which organization to join and what meeting to go to was always connected to how they might be viewed or accepted by others. The participants rarely experienced a time when they decided to go to a meeting or participate in a group without carrying their identity as a visual marker.

The participants also felt the intersections of class and race. All of the students came from middle to upper class backgrounds, and six of the eight students lived in all White neighborhoods. They were very involved in high school and their parents enrolled them in various activities. This involvement continued on into college and each student had either joined an organization or was seeking one. The reality is that race and class are very intertwined, especially in the Black community. Projections for African Americans in 2011-2012 show an increase in homelessness and unemployment rising to 20% (Miah, 2011). However, the reality for the students in this study is that they will most likely not feel this impact. That separation further divides them from the Black community.

The intersections of race, class, phenotype and choice/power are all considerations for the students who were interviewed. It is a complex process and affects decisions that the participants make each day, and those that are made for them. The FMMI and intersectionality were both coding tools which enabled the fluid process of racial identity to be analyzed and themes to emerge. The model below shows a visual representation of how racial identity is made up of several factors flowing in and out of the process at different times, sometimes more than one at a time. Other social identities are represented to show that they are also important factors contributing to racial identity and often intersect. For example, physical appearance and gender, or power/choice with early experiences.

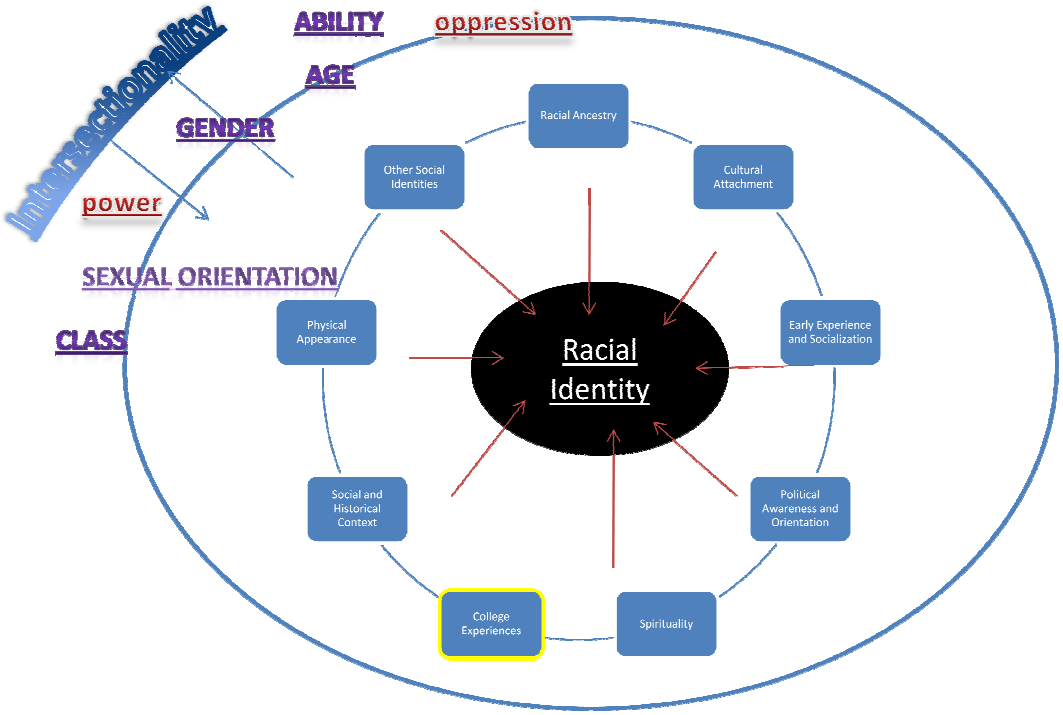

Figure 1. Wijeyesinghe's FMMI with Intersectionality to demonstrate the fluidity of factors affecting racial identity.

CONCLUSION

Identity is a central tenet to understanding a person's background, culture, language and decision making process. It is known that multiracial identities are influenced and formed from a wide array of unique factors including family upbringing, language and culture in the home. That may include culture and language from multiple races and sides of the family. The student experience in college is constructed from a number of interactions and learning inside and outside of the classroom. Multiracial college students arrive on campus with different family backgrounds than many other students and may have different experiences on campus. Little is known about how their identity is shaped by the level of involvement in student groups. These groups range from race based social and professional organizations to student government. Wijeyesinghe's Factor Model of Multiracial Identity (FMMI) provided the foundation for coding interviews with Black-White college students and explored the influence and level of involvement in student organizations and how that impacted racial identity. Intersectionality allowed for the exploration of choice/power, race, class and influences other social identities (gender, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status etc).

Chapter Three: Methods

Understanding multiracial students on a deeper level by college practitioners can help to create campus racial climates that are more accepting and provide a means to understand unique struggles that these students may encounter. In depth interviews through a qualitative study are an effective means of exploring engagement in student organizations and how this relates to the student's racial identity (Cousins, 2009).

The purpose of this study was to discover barriers and or support that student organizations provide to multiracial students and their identities and how higher education practitioners can create environments on predominately White campuses which support these organizations. The research questions are as follows:

1. How is the level of involvement related to Black-White students' racial identity?
2. How is the level of involvement related to other social identities (gender, socio-economic status, sexual orientation, class etc)?

The study was organized utilizing qualitative methods which enabled in depth interviews and analysis.

QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

Qualitative research requires the deeper learning of a particular topic. This study was most appropriate for qualitative inquiry because of the focus on thick descriptions and interpretations of naturally occurring events (Miles & Huberman, 1994) which will be conducted through interviews. "Qualitative data, with their emphasis on people's 'lived experience' are fundamentally well suited for locating the meanings people place on the events, processes and structures of the lives" (Huberman, 1994, p. 10). A quantitative study would be more appropriate if experimental methods were utilized such as a survey. A narrow hypothesis would be identified and data would be collected to

support or refute the hypothesis. To determine the use of qualitative versus quantitative methods, the epistemology, researcher positionality and various methodologies were explored.

The epistemology, or world view is important to acknowledge in situating this study in a qualitative tradition. Epistemology is "related assumptions about the acquisition of knowledge" (Arminio, 2006, p. 8). Constructivism or interpretation is most concerned with the individual and how he/she "makes meaning" of the world around them. The researcher is a part of the work as an active participant. Because of my positionality as a multiracial person, I am a part of the study as an active participant. The nature of reality is socially constructed and the context in which the subject is a part is critical to the research. "Thus, the goal of interpretive research is an understanding of a particular situation or context much more than the discovery of universal laws or rules" (Willis, 2007, p. 99). This study sought to gain knowledge about how multiracial students, particularly those who have one parent of Black descent and one of White descent, explore their racial identity through student organizations. The interpretivist paradigm was best suited to this inquiry because of the focus on the point of view of the participant and his or her subjective opinion of the world. "Thus, for interpretivists, what the world means to the person or group being studied is critically important to good research in the social sciences" (Willis, 2007, p. 6).

There are various methodologies which lend themselves to the study of multiracial students through an interpretivist paradigm. Phenomenology, formulated by Husserl in the early 20th century, focuses on the essence of a person. "Because of the emphasis on the experiences of those individuals living them, phenomenological research focuses on the everyday and ordinary occurrences in human life and on generating thick description" (Arminio, 2006, p. 49). In depth conversations with a few individuals is the

best way in which to discover a lived experience (Cousins, 2009). A "loosening" process occurs during interviewing which ultimately unravels the meaning behind the phenomenon itself, in this case the experiences the Black-White students had in student organizations and how that affected their racial identity. Writing and rewriting about the interviews themselves is also central to discovering what themes the participants produced. Including excerpts from the interviews themselves was an important aspect of the final analysis. Because the issue of identity is a central tenet of the study, phenomenology was the best perspective versus a case study which would focus on one particular group of students but is also based on a "bounded system" (Arminio, 2006, p. 52). Because identity is fluid and the theoretical framework will be the factor model of multiracial identity (FMMI), a case study method does not allow for the movement between factors that an essence model allows. The FMMI is based on eight factors of multiracial identity in which some but not all factors can affect the identity of the person. Grounded theory and ethnography were two other methods explored, however grounded theory requires a constant comparison of the participant to different people and to themselves at different points in time and ethnography requires extensive fieldwork.

As with all phenomenological research, the role of language in the semi-structured interviews are open to interpretation by the researcher. One event can be described in multiple ways by multiple people. The meaning of lived experiences is also influenced by how the person experiences or describes various events. The element of time can influence how the story is told or re-told. The sophistication with the re-telling or explaining of events, as well as how one feels or thinks about particular topics are also a limitation to this method.

In 2008, Willig stated,

> As a result, while it is able to generate detailed, rich descriptions of participants' experiences of situations and events, such research does not tend to further our

> understanding of why such experiences take place and why there may be differences between individuals phenomenological experiences (Willig, 2008, p. 68)

Through the exploration of various epistemologies and methods, the reflection of the researcher is also equally as important in determining what type of study will be conducted. My positionality as a multiracial person has a significant impact on why I chose to study this population, and the biases that I bring to the research.

POSITIONALITY

Qualitative research requires the researcher to examine his/her own position in the research. "Positionality describes the relationship between the researcher and his or her participants and the researcher and his or her topic" (Arminio, 2006, p. 31). It is important that I situate myself as a researcher in this study as my beliefs and worldview shape the methods, questions and interpretations of this study.

I am a multiracial female, with racial identities of African American and White. I say that I am multiracial as my social identity. I believe that race is socially constructed. I grew up as an adopted child of a White family in a predominately White community in the Midwest. I have a sister who is also adopted and is African American and White. In high school I dated and later married a White man. I was a first generation college student and went to a small, private liberal arts college in the Midwest. This institution was primarily White and I had some of my first close friendships with people of color. I struggled with my identity as a multiracial person and would have considered myself Black if asked. I did not claim the label of multiracial until later in life. I was very uncomfortable around Black people because I never had the opportunity to interact in the Black community as I always considered myself too "light" and was terrified that I would not be accepted.

I received my Master's Degree in College Student Personnel from a mid-sized institution in the Midwest. I had my first opportunity to advise student organizations and took on the multicultural group as one of my first assignments. I deeply enjoyed working with the students, especially the African American females in the organization. I began to wonder if the mixed students that I would encounter on campus had similar experiences to myself as an undergraduate. I graduated and took my first job at a large, southern institution and again advised student committees with the student union. I experienced a range of culture shocks, from moving to the south to advising groups of color with which I was not familiar but willing to learn about.

I have worked in higher education for almost 16 years. I have learned about and explored my own racial identity as a multiracial person. My experience with the Social Justice Training Institute provided me with the first experience interacting with other multiracial people in an environment in which we explored our identity together. This experience changed my life and solidified my desire to research students who come from two different or more racial backgrounds, just like me.

To address potential bias, I must acknowledge what Fine (1994) called "working the hyphen" which refers to an insider-outsider status and exploring each perspective. As an insider, I am a multiracial person. As an outsider, I am a college administrator who is educated and working on a terminal degree. The students that I propose to interview are multiracial as I am, but I do hold power in my role on campus. I will actively reflect in my researcher notes on each side as the research progresses, and determine if I hold a bias in analyzing the data. Independent transcript review will enable the bias to be limited. A further discussion is present in the limitations section.

DATA COLLECTION

Site selection

The site selected for this study was Big University. Big U was an ideal setting for this research as the likelihood of the existence of more mixed race students was prevalent. This institution had a population of 50,995 students in the Fall of 2009 with 38,168 as undergraduates. Fifty-three point five percent of the undergraduate population was categorized as White, 4.9% as African American and .2% as Unknown. It is important to note that students were not given the opportunity to mark more than one race on admissions applications.

The demographics of the state where Big U resides are changing. "Together, Blacks and Hispanics represent about 54 percent of the 15-to-34 population, but only 39 percent of the students….". The population attending college is also rising. "Since Fall 2000, enrollment in (this state) in higher education (both public and independent institutions) has increased by 235,466 students – or nearly 23 percent. Enrollment totaled approximately 1.25 million students in fall 2007". Because the diversity of the state is increasing, and the college aged population is also rising, a need to understand students in terms of needs and services exist. The size of the population at Big U is large and the number of White and African American students could also be sizeable, there may also be a higher possibility that Black-White students checked White on admissions applications. The number of involvement opportunities on campus including over 900 student organizations, more than 50 Greek fraternities and sororities and a number of recreational sports teams. With the diversity of the campus and the number of student groups, Big U made a rich ground for finding multiracial students engaged in student organizations.

Interviews

Consent to recruit participants was obtained from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of Big U. Consent forms were signed by each participant, and no one under the age of 18 was interviewed. As directed by phenomenological research, there are three types of interviews that could have been conducted: structured, semi-structured and unstructured. Structured interviews rely on closed ended questions; unstructured interviews involve the researcher guiding the interview. Semi-structured interviews allow for researchers to guide the conversation, yet allow the participant to answer or expand on themes as they wish. "Semi-structured interviews are so-called because the interview is structured around a set of themes which serves as a guide to facilitate interview talk" (Cousin, 2009, p. 72). Because the notion of a "safe space" for students to speak about their engagement or non-engagement in student organizations, their racial identity, and the getting to the essence of the person as in phenomenological research, interviews over focus groups were chosen as the best method. The group dynamic of a focus group may not allow for an opportunity for students to open up and tell their story in a confidential space. Although perhaps useful to share and compare stories about their engagement in student groups, not every student may be involved in an organization for various reasons. Students need to feel comfortable talking about a subject that is potentially sensitive and the group option does not lend itself as well as one on one interviews.

The interviews conducted were semi-structured to explore the straight forward closed ended questions regarding how the student identifies racially, if he/she was engaged in student organizations, if the group was race based and how the student decided to join the organization, yet provide the ability to explore how that relates to the student's racial identity. Open ended questions were posed addressing if the student's

racial background affected the choice of the organization(s) joined and if perhaps the student did not join particular groups on campus because of his/her racial background.

This study is grounded in phenomenology, the experience or the "essence" of the student was the focus. In particular, how the student sees his experiences with a student organization and how that has affected their racial identity was the center of the interview. "Since phenomenological research requires the researcher to enter the life world of the research participant, it is extremely important that the questions posed to the participant are open-ended and non-directive" (Willig, 2008, p. 57). After the open ended questions, a series of probes, or ways to find further information was utilized. Probes "help you manage the conversation by regulating the length of answers and degree of detail, clarifying unclear sentences or phrases, filling in missing steps and keeping the conversation on topic" (Rubin, 2005, p. 164). Questions such as "Tell me more about" and "Can you clarify" were employed to further examine the racial identity piece of the interview and to get to the detail involved in this area. The semi-structured interviews lasted approximately 45 minutes. The students were asked to identify other students who might also be interested in being interviewed. After the first interview, transcripts were made and shared with the participant. The participants were then asked to schedule a second interview estimated to take 60 minutes. During this time, the student was asked if there was anything in the transcript he/she would like to elaborate upon as well as any follow up questions for clarification.

Also important in phenomenological research is the deep understanding of the issue being studied, a completeness of detail in the descriptions and the full exploration of the topic. To accomplish this, researcher reflections and memos were captured immediately after each interview describing the interplay between researcher and participant. The fundamental questions, "what is it like to be a multiracial student in a

student organization and how does it affect your racial identity?" were explored in detail. "One of the tensions inherent in phenomenological research is the focus on the essential nature of a phenomenon, the qualis, while maintaining the overall orientation toward the structure that holds the constitutive elements (Arminio, 2006, p. 52). The researcher and the foundational question are key components to this research. How the researcher situates himself or herself in the quest to answer a fundamental question is very important. "The integral process of 'turning to the phenomenon' situates the researcher as an individual with an 'abiding concern'" (Van Manen as cited in Arminio, 2006, p. 48). Investigating the experience of the multiracial students was the core of the study. "Because of the emphasis on the experiences of those individuals living them, phenomenological research focuses on the everyday and ordinary occurrences in human life and on generating thick description" (Arminio, p. 49). Through researcher memos, probing questions and the use of the factor model of multiracial identity (FMMI), a full exploration was conducted. The questions proposed for the interviews can be reviewed in the appendix (See Appendix D).

Participant Selection

The students invited to participate in this study were a) registered as undergraduate students at Big U, b) in their third or fourth year of study, c) have parents of two different racial backgrounds, one African American, Black or mixed and one White or mixed. A small group of students were identified for in depth interviews in the Fall of 2010. "Qualitative researchers usually work with small samples of people, nested in their context and studied in-depth unlike quantitative researchers, who aim for larger numbers of context stripped cases and seek statistical significance" (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 27). Students may identify their racial background in various ways, and the

purpose of the study was to explore how students come to identity in these ways through student organizations. Students may or may not be engaged in student organizations.

There were many methods to be considered when identifying students. Maximum variation involves looking for outlier cases, the critical case looks for an instance that proves a theory, and searching for extreme cases could also have been employed. I believed finding multiracial students on campus was best conducted via word of mouth or having other students and colleagues identify potential participants because they know or believe they are multiracial. Many multiracial students do not openly discuss their racial identities or others may make assumptions about their racial backgrounds (Chang, 2010). Students were identified through a process known as "snowball sampling". Snowball sampling "identifies cases of interest from people who know people who know what cases are information-rich" (Miles& Huberman, 1994, p. 28). Initially, emails and phone calls were placed to colleagues and students on campus to assist in identifying the appropriate students (see Appendix A). Other student organizations were contacted such as the Black Student Union, the African American Culture Committee and the Multicultural Information Center to request an email be sent to their members, as well as an offer to speak briefly about my study. Because of the interest in students not involved with organizations, contacts were made with campus administrators who also may know these students. The best methods proved to be word of mouth between students and from academic advisors and staff who ran specific programs.

Once names of students were secured, each student was contacted and asked their interest in participating in a series of interviews. An Informed Consent document was emailed to each student for their review and signature (see Appendix B). If they agreed, an initial interview time was set and the student was asked if she has a preference for location. None of the students had a preference for location of the meeting, so all of the

first and second interviews took place in a campus office. The office location proved to be useful as a private space but also helped the students know where to find me in the future. Many of them have stopped by since our interviews have ended, and we continue to discuss family and coursework and I have found myself in a mentoring role. I believe that this shows the value of a multiracial staff who may make connections with multiracial students.

An in-take questionnaire was sent to each student to collect demographic information such as hometown, gender, classification, best contact information, age, major and a few short questions to begin the conversation about racial identity (see Appendix C). It was estimated that 10-15 students was an ideal sample to conduct in-depth interviews because of the nature of phenomenological research as in depth, and seeking to know the essence of the person. However, I secured interviews with eight students. This smaller sample size enabled one, 45 to 60 minute interview to be conducted, followed by a second in which the transcript was shared with the participant and a second series of follow up questions was asked depending on what follow-up questions develop from the first series (see Appendix D). In order for the student to feel comfortable in answering these questions, two important issues to be addressed before and during the interview were establishing rapport and building trust.

Establishing rapport and building trust

Because the nature of the research may be sensitive, establishing rapport and building trust was paramount to the experience of the students. The initial invitation was worded to convey the confidentiality between the researcher and participant, to further explain the "conversation" style of the interview and to expand upon the importance of speaking to students who have parents of different racial backgrounds, in particular one Black and one White because of their unique experiences. "Secondly, the interviewer

needs to do his/her best to minimize the power present in the interview by, for instance, disclosing their own relevant experiences and by facilitating an exploratory thrust rather than an information prospecting one (Cousins, 2009, p. 76). My own racial background put some students more at ease. The location of the interview was also important, and the campus office provided an agreed upon space for privacy but also for a place that the students can return to see me. The interviews were digitally recorded and transcribed. Each student was asked to choose a pseudonym to protect their anonymity and the digital recordings were destroyed upon transcription. After the transcription was completed from both interviews, the analysis of the data began.

DATA ANALYSIS

According to Miles & Huberman (1994) data analysis consists of three concurrent flows of activity: data reduction, data display and conclusion drawing. Data reduction is "the process of selecting, focusing, simplifying, abstracting, and transforming the data that appear in written-up field notes" (p.10). This process includes coding, writing memos and summaries. Data display is a means to analysis which requires the researcher to decide once the data is collected, what type of chart, graph or matrix will be utilized to read through the data. Conclusion drawing is establishing meaning to the data collected. It is a means to verify that the conclusions can also be verified.

In phenomenology, a theme is often understood to be reoccurring in describing a particular experience of the participants. "Structures of experience are the unit of analysis" (Arminio, p. 89). Wijeyesinghe (2001) created the factor model of multiracial identity (FMMI) which consists of several factors that affect the choice of racial identity of multiracial people. The original study by Wijeyesinghe was based on a qualitative study of African American/European adults. Multiracial identity can be based on some or all of the factors, and they can be fluid depending on the situation. These can be

utilized when coding the data as a form of data reduction or structure. Coding is a method of analysis. "Codes are tags or labels for assigning units of meaning to the descriptive or inferential information compiled during a study" (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 56). Pattern codes are explanatory and inferential and require extensive rereading of the data, as in phenomenological inquiry. Codes are not only descriptive in nature, but can also be applied throughout the data analysis to determine patterns or hidden meanings of information.

The FMMI was utilized as pre-determined codes which extend from Wijeyesinghe's theoretical framework. Transcripts were reviewed multiple times using selective coding or patterns, which allowed for the grouping of the concepts from the interviewees. Although phenomenology embraces the concept of "bracketing" or putting aside that which we already know of the participants, the codes were a useful starting point. The coding schema remained flexible to accommodate other themes if they became apparent. The data was transcribed and reviewed line by line to first produce notes that were useful upon later reading. "These notes are simply a way of documenting issues that come up for the researcher upon his or her initial encounter with the text" (Willig, 2008, p. 58). The second stage was to assign one or more of the FMMI codes and to identify any new areas in which codes could be added as a revision to the FMMI. Envivo coding software was employed to determine where codes should be placed.

The FMMI codes are: cultural attachment, early experience and socialization, political awareness and orientation, spirituality, other social identities, social and historical context, physical appearance and racial ancestry. College experiences was an additional category, along with coding for the intersections of the participants' racial identity with gender, power/choice, sexual orientation and other social identities. The

framework informed the coding structure by providing a starting point with which to code.

Validity

The validity of a study is a key component to the understanding of the data collected. Because the participants have a right to know what the results may be due to their interview, and because the interpretation of the researcher is prevalent, a useful tool is participant feedback. An initial review of questions was piloted with a college student who later became a participant, to assess the need to change or update the questions. An opportunity was given to each participant to review their transcript and to make comments as a "member check". "The member-checking technique provides participants the opportunity to react to the findings and interpretations emerged as a result of his or her participation" (Arminio, 2006, p. 99). Probing and summarizing comments throughout the interview were made to ensure the accuracy of what the researcher was "hearing" the participant say. Reflective comments were made after each interview to capture any biases that may have been interjected into the conversation.

LIMITATIONS

As with all phenomenological research, the role of language in the semi-structured interviews are open to interpretation by the researcher. One event can be described in multiple ways by multiple people. The meaning of lived experiences is also influenced by how the person experiences or describes various events. The element of time can influence how the story is told or re-told. The sophistication with the re-telling or explaining of events, as well as how one feels or thinks about particular topics are also a limitation to this method.

Willig (2008) stated,

> As a result, while it is able to generate detailed, rich descriptions of participants' experiences of situations and events, such research does not tend to further our understanding of why such experiences take place and why there may be differences between individuals phenomenological experiences. (Willig, 2008, p. 68)

This study was conducted on a single campus, and could also be considered a convenient sample site as the researcher has a close affiliation with the university. However, the demographics of Big U make this university an ideal location for this research because of the number of students of color on campus, and the size of the university encompassing many students. The study is also limited to Black-White multiracial students and does not include other mixed race people. Upper division students in their third or fourth year are the focus and excludes first and second year students as they may have different experiences. There was one final student who came forward and asked if she could be a part of the interview, and although she was a first year student, I welcomed her into the process. The snowball technique was primarily employed to identify students, instead of focusing on those involved in certain campus programs, such as retention or a specific organization. There also may be students who were left out of the sample because they are not involved on campus and so many students or administrators do not know them. The engagement explored is limited to student organizations, which is a more social activity, rather than looking at students engaged in academic or other settings. All of these limitations were carefully considered when constructing the study, however, expanding into the mentioned limitations were determined to be beyond the scope of the study. The FMMI and intersectionality were utilized for coding, but there are also other coding schema and theories which may also be suited to this study. However, the FMMI and intersectionality are the most appropriate given the population under study and provided a useful coding schema.

Chapter Four: Participants

The combination of Black and White races presents two widely researched areas of race studies: the African American or Black identity, and White identity. Combining these into one multiracial intersection, brings racially different knowledge, cultural cues and backgrounds together. Exploring what it means to be Black and what it means to be White meets at one junction. A college career is filled with opportunities to learn, grow and reflect on the values and beliefs that one has. For the eight participants in this study, this exploration was fulfilled partly by becoming engaged in student organizations. The students identified as Black, White or mixed and have parents who were divided accordingly. Each student had a different story about the foundation which multiracial childhood, family and critical incidents created growing up. This chapter begins with short descriptions of each person, to present the essence of the student, of which phenomenology intends and also researcher reflections about each participant. Chapter five presents an in depth analysis of the data with themes and Chapter six provides discussions, implications for practitioners and future research.

Participants were asked a series of questions about their background, how they identified racially, what organizations they were involved in and why, and their racial identity. The research questions were specifically targeted to find which organizations they were involved in, if they were still exploring other groups, what level of involvement they had and if they held leadership positions. Racial identity was explored by asking about critical incidents that occurred in college with roommates, organizations and classes. The intersection of Blackness and Whiteness became apparent, each as a unique identity but also as a merged, fluid multiracial experience. Three of the students mentioned being part of military families, which is also an interesting point of note. Power/choice was an additional theme that became a repeated pattern in incidents in

which the participants felt powerless and "other" as well as powerful in affluence, education and the phenotype which a lighter skin can impart. Subsequent chapters will present excerpts from the interviews analyzed within Wijeyesinghe's Factor Model of Multiracial Identity (FMMI) as framework with the addition of college and young adult socialization; and an exploration of Black identity, White identity and power dynamics. The final chapter will discuss and recommend ways in which practitioners may improve campus relations, advising, and interactions for Black-White students to encourage involvement in student organizations to develop a healthy racial identity.

FELICIA

Felicia is a 19 year old female from a large metropolitan area, and she is a Junior who describes herself racially as mixed. She is a lighter skinned brown woman, with curly long black hair. She has a huge smile that she flashes often, and is a very cheerful, polite person. Her father is African American and her mother is White. She was born overseas and her father was in the military. She has one older sibling who lives on the East Coast, who has a bachelor's degree and is married. She describes her childhood as "experiencing both worlds" in terms of a balance of extracurricular activities (dance and track), socially having a diverse group of friends and "even in my household my dad doesn't parent me more than my mom so I really think I have like an equal balance". She grew up in a predominately White neighborhood and describes her socioeconomic status as upper-middle class. Felicia talked about having a diverse groups of friends growing up, but feeling like she was more accepted by the White crowd, even though there were a few incidents in which she was clearly not accepted. During one incident in elementary school, a White student came up to her and pulled her hair, which was straightened that day. Her father called the school, but no action was taken. She also talked about

instances of her family not being served in a Denny's in New Mexico and not stopping in particular places while traveling through Louisiana.

In college, at Big U, Felicia has a diverse group of friends. Her experiences thus far are to be involved in student organizations, but primarily professional in nature as tied to her major. Representing her Black professional organization at a Black Student Lockin, she found that no one talked to her and she felt extremely uncomfortable. Alternatively, she describes another event at which she represented her organization. The event was open to all students and was made up primarily of White students. She had no issue with anyone, and felt very accepted.

> You know, I met people right away. I don't know what it is. I have always felt like, I just feel White, some of the White peers and friends have always been more inviting and accepting…..so I really did feel uncomfortable at the Black student lock in for like the first entire day.

Felicia attempted to engage one of the other female officers at the Lockin as she was interested in also joining her organization, but she was met with a chilly reception. She attributes it to a "Black women's mentality" which she does not feel that she possesses. When probed more about that thought pattern, she said that she is a more giddy, happy person, with a different mentality.

> Especially with boyfriends, especially. Like, guys are jerks and things happen, kind of thing, and in high school half of my Black friends are like, uh-uh, you better go do this to his car. I'm like, I'm not doing that. I'm cordial about not saying that all Black women are like that, but think about the movie *Diary of a Mad Black Woman*. It's portraying how Black women act towards situations like that. I would never do that, I would be embarrassed of myself if I did that. So, I think that's what it is; they have a different attitude, and attitude is everything. Attitude is how you act towards someone every second of the day, and maybe our attitudes just don't fit. I didn't think about it that way. I think that's what it is, actually. I'm just overall a little more chirpy.

Felicia discussed many instances of feeling uncomfortable in spaces and places on campus, such as a feeling that she would never walk into a closed in lounge that is a

primarily Black hangout as well as a feeling that Black students are more into the social aspects of campus, while she moving into furthering her career.

> First off, I know their first thought would be, what is she doing here. I feel like I'm just not accepted enough to just walk in and hang out and sit down and chill. I know some of my really best friends here are Black, but we're all on the same page. She's an officer in an organization too. I just feel like they think you're doing too much.

She also discussed having Black friends and White friends, but noted that her assessment of being able to fit in with both groups was because of her lighter phenotype.

> And usually with the White crowd it's cool to have a Black person in your group of friends. It's like hey, can you teach me how to dance, or something like that. That's fine if that's how they wanna invite me in or accept me, that's fine, but it's usually cool to have a Black person in your group.

Felicia talked about being asked more by Black friends and acquaintances than White ones, "what are you?" and it seemed to be more of an issue with her Black friends. Most Black friends assume that she is mixed, and tend to ask her about that more often.

She is currently an officer in a Black professional organization, of which she became involved her first few weeks on campus. She approached the table at an organization fair, and has been an active member every since. There are other mixed students also in the organization who have identified as such. Her main appreciation of the organization is the professional nature and people that she is exposed to meeting. She had never networked with or met other Black professionals and she found it quite eye opening to see people that look like her out in the working world. She feels as if her upbringing in a White neighborhood has helped her in different ways but mainly feeling comfortable in joining diverse or mostly White organizations. She sought out a few other groups, and plans to become involved in a women's organization and a social fraternity, both are primarily made up of White students. Her main criteria for adding another organization is a diverse group of people. However, Felicia noted that it is more difficult

to find diverse groups at Big U, because the campus is socially segregated by race, which other students also mention in their interviews.

LISA

Lisa is a 20 year old junior government major, who was born in Los Angeles, but grew up with her maternal grandmother in a large southern city until she was five. Lisa has medium toned brown skin and relaxed hair. She exudes confidence and I can tell that she will be a perfect politician! Her mother is Black and was 40 when Lisa was born. She moved back to the south after Lisa was born so her family could raise her child for awhile. Lisa's father is White and she has had limited contact with him. After the age of five, Lisa went back to live with her mother in a primarily White neighborhood and attended a predominately White elementary school. Lisa's high school was more diverse, but segregated by honors and non-honors. The school was also low performing with a high number of dropouts but also had the highest number of advanced placement scholars in the city. Lisa was very involved in high school in activities such as student government, student council, debate team, Spanish Club and orchestra.

Lisa grew up attending the Black church, which her great-great grandfather founded. However, she was also known as the "mixed kid" and many of the other Black children would "push her to the side". This resulted in her becoming very adult centered as a child and spending most of her time with her family, which was very accepting of her.

She wanted to attend a big university, and applied to a range of schools – from "easy acceptance" to "difficult admissions". She was waitlisted at one of the more prestigious schools of which she wanted to attend, but ended up coming to Big U for the school spirit, the football team, lots of friends and academics. The first semester, she had friends from many backgrounds who lived on the same residence hall floor, but by

second semester most of her friends were Black whom she met by playing cards and dominoes in the residence hall.

When describing herself racially, Lisa says she is mixed or bi-racial but also sometimes says she's Black. "There's my Black mom and Black family, so I'm Black".

Regarding her racial identity, Lisa talked about how much it has evolved since high school, middle school and pre-school. Having very few Black friends, her social and academic circles were primarily White. But in college, her social circle is predominately Black and she notes that she is the lightest one, sometimes being called nicknames like Casper or Alice in Wonderland. Usually laughing about it, she shrugs it off and tells the person that she hasn't been outside for awhile or needs a tan; but sometimes she says she is half White and to get over it.

When discussing phenotype, Lisa comments,

> …sometimes I wish the Black community would be receptive to mixed students and accept them for being mixed and not just Black or White. I think negative connotations can come with being mixed, or at the same time some guys prefer the light skinned girls and you get treated differently, and sometimes when I see them treat me a little better than one of my friends when they're all Black, that kind of disturbs me.

Lisa is also very involved on campus, where she began in Student Senate and then switched over to Student Government. She also participates or has participated when her schedule allows it, in bible study groups and campus ministries. She tells a story about student government, in which she backed a candidate who was much more involved with the White community than the Black one, and how many people were upset with her because of who she chose to support. She thinks of that experience as a defining moment in terms of her Blackness because she still chose to support him and people took notice of what she as a Black woman was doing.

When discussing why she has chosen to become involved in the organizations that she has, versus any race based groups, Lisa commented,

> It's probably more shyness with the Black community. I can walk into a White group and be good, but Black is a little different. I know a lot of Black students, but a lot of times people that go to those meeting I don't know and I'm not familiar with, and I don't like to go to places where I can't talk to anyone. I think Black people are a lot less receptive to new people than the people that are in their group.

In terms of being a mixed student with unique needs, Lisa notes how interesting it is to fit into a group when you're not White or Black and how great it would be to have more activities for mixed students or developed for mixed students to increase their leadership. Lisa will be participating in elections for a large student organization on campus.

MICHAEL

Michael is a 20 year old Junior African and African American Studies major from a mid size southern city. His career goal is to be a professor in African American Studies. His father is Black and his mother is White. He has one older sister who has the same mother but a different father and is also multiracial Black-White, and two other brothers and sisters between his parents. When speaking about his siblings and parents, he comments how they are all pretty independent people, doing their own things, not affluent but comfortable. He describes his childhood as living with his White mother but culturally being more Black in a neighborhood that had more older residents until one family with children moved in, but culturally and racially it was a mixed neighborhood. Growing up, his father was in the military and his parents had "marital problems" so he did not see his father very often. At this time his parents are still married and living in the same household but for much of his upbringing his father was not present. For high

school, Michael went to a magnet school with 400 other students and was involved primarily in academic activities.

Michael describes a defining moment in his childhood when he first discovered he was multiracial,

> I remember when I was like, I don't remember the exact context of when this was brought up, but I remember being in the bathroom and my brother telling me I was Black and I'm like, no, I'm White. When I was that young I had only seen my mom so I was like, I'm White, no I'm White. He was like, no, you're Black, you're Black. Then eventually he had to go get my mom and be like, no Michael, you are Black, that's what she told me too, and I was like, oh. I felt stupid but it was just because I didn't know, but that's when I realized mixing race is, I guess.

When at school, Michael felt he was seen as the Black one, but when at home he felt like he was the White one as seen by his siblings. One day, his sister saw him driving and told him he looked very "Black", a comment he is still struggling to understand. When describing himself racially, Michael uses the word mulatto, but he identifies more with the Black culture. However, he describes the differentiation between a White person asking him and a Black person asking him. Black people can typically tell that he is mixed, while White people sometimes cannot or do not ask.

When discussing his choice of words to describe himself racially, Michael said,

> I usually say mulatto, but even then when I say that to most people they're just like 'what?' I'm like, Black and White. Like I have to break it down for them. Sometimes if I'm lazy I'll just say Black, but most people don't even ask me that, like it's assumed, you know?

He chose Big U for the academics and proximity to home, although it was not his first choice of university. He is involved in student government and has tried a few other organizations, like a Black social group. Michael also comments on the spaces and places that he does not feel comfortable going, like the lounge that Felicia had mentioned.

> …every time we would have like the freshman meetings, every time I walked into the lounge like I was stared at, and I don't understand why. It always felt like it was because I am the one who sticks out. I mean, I don't really feel that

> comfortable going to the lounge now if it's like a lot of people in there. I would just always feel awkward in those kinds of situations.

Michael commented extensively on his racial identity and what he has learned thus far in college about it. The student organization that he first chose to join as a freshman was a race based group, and he is not longer involved in it. As a high school student, he had read many works by Black scholars, which is one of the reasons he chose to be an African Studies major. He has read Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria by Beverly Tatum (1997), and understands the phases of racial identity. When he is around a mostly Black crowd, he feels like the "White" one, and that Black college students definitely make him feel this way by the way they interact with him, or his perception of how they interact with him. He thinks back on the Tatum book and knows that any confusion that he feels is a shift between phases, or a regression as she writes.

For example,

> ….one of the kids that was in the group was like…I had said the word 'gangsta' and he's full-Black and he told me, 'what did you say?' And I said it again, I said 'gangsta', and he was like, 'no, no, no, you can't say that, I don't even say that.' I was like, it's just those kinds of things like I don't feel, I don't understand why people are like that towards me. He doesn't day 'gangsta' with an 'a', I guess, he was trying to stress that he says 'gangster' and not 'gangsta'. And I was like, I guess dude, but just like those kinds of things it's like ridiculous to me, and I feel like I don't want to put myself in that situation either. I feel like he's just one of those people that like since the beginning like even though we've never, we haven't interacted that much and we definitely haven't done anything to dislike each other. I guess generally he's an asshole, you know? There's no other way to put it.

Michael also talks about a realization that his neighborhood and school growing up was really a unique experience in terms of being mixed racially. Many children have probably never had to know different cultures or backgrounds of a family like he does.

He felt completely comfortable with his "Blackness" until "the situation with the race based group really shook me up" in his first year of college. Since that time, Michael

has joined Student Government. He contemplated going back to a race based group, but thought against it.

JAIDEN

Jaiden is a 19 year old Junior from a mid-sized southern city. She has medium brown skin and often wears her hair in an afro or has different colors in it. She is a Psychology major with a White father and a Black Jamaican mother, the only child from that marriage. She has three brothers and a sister, two of the brothers are Black the other brother is White, as well as her sister. She only identifies their races "to give people a sense of who they are". These siblings are from previous marriages of both her mother and her father so Jaiden is the youngest. Growing up, Jaiden traveled a lot as her father is in the military. She had the Jamaican and the White cultures in her home, which were primarily situated in the White suburbs except for two years in which she lived on a military base with predominately Black families. She has always associated closer with the Black community, which affected which major she chose in college. It was from this military base that she attended her last two years of high school in an all Black school and graduated early. Her co-curricular activities included an honor society and captain of the dance team.

Jaiden describes her family as very close knit. They did not have relationships with either maternal or paternal grandparents because they did not approve of the marriage of her parents. Her Black brothers called her "oreo" and her mother's nick name for her was "pale face". They did have conversations about race growing up, mostly surrounding obstacles that she might face out in the world, such as other people not being as accepting of who she is as a person. Jaiden associates most with the word "mixed" to describe her racial identity. She enjoys diversity and being around different people. Her

roommate have all been White students. When people ask her what she is, she always says Jamaican and White, not matter who is asking.

Her mother definitely influenced how she speaks about herself, her race and her culture.

> My parents always instilled in me, especially my mother, that I shouldn't just acknowledge being Black. I guess because specifically people would look at me, I usually have a huge Afro, my hair is not usually straight, so I guess they would look at me and assume I'm…I mean just Black and maybe something else. So, she always made it clear to me that I shouldn't just say Black, cause she taught me that from a very young age, like four years old. I always say Jamaican-White.

At the end of her freshman year, she joined an organization that is affiliated with her major and is also a member of a violence prevention group. She did attempt to join a race based group, associated with the Black social scene but was really looking for something smaller and more intimate where she could find leadership opportunities. She feels that in order to have leadership positions in the Black social organizations, you have to be very oriented toward meeting people, mingling and entertaining. Her goal for joining a student organization was to have something that impacted the wider community, where she could learn and be service oriented. Jaiden's hope is to affect the Black community through outreach with Black youth preparing them for college, sharing knowledge and general life skills.

BILL

Bill is a 19 year old Junior, majoring in accounting. He is of lighter brown skin, with reddish tones in his hair and lighter brown eyes. He is from a large, metropolitan southern city. He is Irish on his grandmother's side, Cherokee on his grandfather's side and African American and classifies himself as mixed. His Black father grew up in the projects and found education as a way to "get out", so education is very important in Bill's family. His White mother was from an economically advantaged military family

who traveled and lived all over the world. Bill has one older brother who he describes as "really dark" and one older sister. The older brother is currently in a PhD program, but as a child, struggled with the school system who told his family that he was mentally challenged. Bill also faced obstacles as he went from being a high academic, award winning student who skipped a grade and upon moving to another state, was told that he also needed special attention and tutoring. He attributes some of that shift to his race and the predominately White teachers.

In the large southern city, the family's house was in a quiet, mostly White higher income neighborhood ("thanks to my dad"). Growing up, the children were constantly asked if they had different fathers because of the variance in their skin tones, Bill is the lightest child. Bill said, "even my dogs sometimes were Blacker than me". He went to a large high school with Latino and Black students, played tennis and was involved in a few academic activities. He remarks about his tennis team being primarily Asian, and that if you were Black at the school you participated in basketball or football, so he was the only Black student on the tennis team. His mother did not want him to play football for fear of injury. He had a wide variety of friends, both racially and socio-economically.

Bill has very strong opinions about racial identity, and what he terms "American White" versus "European White". When asked what his racial background is, he says mixed or multiracial, but he also is very adamant at saying Irish and Black, not White and Black.

He comments,

> I guess you could say, I don't really feel right in classifying myself of American White descent because that's just not the way it is. It's not that I have a problem with the White culture. I don't even know what the White culture is; it's just that from what I've seen, the stereotypical American White, I'm not crazy about being looked at as that being part of my culture.

Bill only applied to Big U for college entrance. He has always lived on campus and has many stories of experiences with White roommates who were disrespectful to either him, the other roommates or the place in which they lived. His involvement and leadership experience has consisted mainly of one international group as the financial officer, but he will not be returning to the group because of "inappropriate use of funds" by a White officer (as he points out).

He also comments on the social segregation of the campus by race, which is one reason he has not really found the group he wishes to join.

> I guess I'm viewing them as little cliques again. You have the Blacks with the Blacks; the Asians with the Asians; the Indians with the Indians; the Hispanics with the Hispanics. It's just that it's great to be highly involved with your culture that you turn a blank eye to one of the other cultures and wanting to hang out with them. Or, being that person sit at a table where you see five different races and ethnicities at one table instead of one table full of Black people or one full of White people.

Bill will be seeking out a professional student organization to join in the coming semester, one that is perhaps tied to his major. He is not so interested in searching for a race-based group, but is open to one that has a "diverse membership".

DARRYL

Darryl is a 21 year old Senior who is majoring in Finance. He has medium brown skin tone and phenotypically looks more South Asian. He is originally from an Island in the Atlantic but moved to the United States in fourth grade. Darryl makes a note that in his native country, the distinctions between race were light-skinned or dark-skinned so the experience of moving to the states and being asked to choose a racial category was very confusing and he still struggles with what to say when asked. His parents are both of mixed racial backgrounds and most likely identify more with the White culture, although from an outward appearance they may be categorized as Black. The three

members of the family are all naturalized citizens. The racial background of the family includes Chinese, Spanish, East Indian, English and Black. Their neighborhood was fairly affluent with many White and Asian families.

Filling out forms and checking a box racially has always been difficult for Darryl. He was asked many times what "he was" and how he identified.

When discussing race and growing up, he said,

> I think I might be Black on my student records, White on my driving records, and like I think there's always like confusion even with government records as to what I am, it's really funny.

When in high school, Darryl was chosen to participate in a summer camp at Big U. This activity helped to cement his choice to attend the university. Most of the other students were of color, and so he was really thinking that the campus was a diverse and open environment. Darryl lived on campus his first year with four roommates, 2 of whom were also multiracial whom he knew from high school. They had many conversations about race and being mixed. He commented that many of the other multiracial students that he has met have been Black-White or Asian-White and he perceives easier to identify than his racial background. He is constantly asked about his racial makeup, sometimes in blunt ways, and sometimes in drawn out questioning ways in which he can sense that someone is hinting around and wants to know the story but he may or may not disclose it if he is not feeling up to explaining.

Darryl feels that Big U is very socially segregated and comments about how he feels high school is different from what he has experienced in college.

> I think high school in my early years was a lot different how I saw the world than when I came to college, and I would say that I was a lot more open to races and stuff and kind of encouraged diversity, but I feel like when I came to college I became a lot more segregated, it became a lot tougher to be with different groups because everything here in the business school...so I'm not White enough to get into the White fraternity, I'm not Black enough to get into the Black fraternity, so where do I fit. And it was only really when I came to college that that really kind

> of put a chip on my shoulder, almost, and it felt like I didn't belong anywhere cause it felt like it took like 10 steps backward. In high school and everything it was like at first you could hang out with all kinds of different people then you come to college and it's like everybody's segregated and stick to their own kind, they don't really mix that much other than in the classrooms. That's something that really shocked me and a little bit threw me; it was discouraging to me.

In college, Darryl joined an Asian student organization in which he feels that he really "stands out". He did not feel compelled to join a White group, or one with mostly White students and also did not feel completely comfortable in an all Black group. With the Asian group, he felt that he did not have to prove that he was Asian and people may not naturally think that he was Asian, so it felt the most comfortable organization to join. Darryl also had friends that he could attend the meetings with, which he does not have in the Black community. He has attended other group meetings, one related to diversity and one tied to a major, but feels as if he has made his closest friends in this particular organization. Darryl does feel like sometimes the group almost showcases him as a member to say that all people really are welcome in their organization, a "poster child for diversity". He may even go so far as to say tokenized. At times, it is like he is being shown as a member for his race, not for the merit that he brings with his hard work. Sometimes members will make jokes about his Blackness but he does not take offense. As a leader in the organization, he feels that other members really look up to him and often know who he is as a person who does great things, a contributor and someone who makes a difference.

The idea of joining a White fraternity has been a turn off, with the sentiments that perhaps Black and Latino fraternities may be more accepting. He perceives White fraternities with a very negative attitude, and making fun at other's expenses, but not sure where he has built that perception. With a Black fraternity in particular though, Darryl says his vibe is that he is viewed as being there for things that are for Blacks, as taking something that may not be for him, even though he is part Black.

Darryl also talked about sometimes calling himself a "mutt" or making racist jokes because he can make fun of any race, even though he knows it's wrong. He does not get offended when others make racist jokes.

He summed up his college experience and racial identity as a progression,

> It was kind of like high school was a good progression and college is a step back and then you go back to the workplace and it's like they put the whole diversity thing back to you again. It was good to see that but it was also kind of disturbing to you that in college you're only like kind of around the same people then you have to work with other different kinds of people.

VANESSA

Vanessa is a 20 year old Junior who is a transfer student, she is from another state. She has light brown skin and long curly black hair that she usually wears down. Her parents met in high school and do not have family that live in their state at this time. Both of her parents graduated from Big U. She has one older brother who played football in college. He is one of the reasons that she spent two years in junior college before applying to Big U, so she could watch him and be his biggest fan. Vanessa's father is Native American, English, Black and Greek and her mother is Sicilian. Vanessa identifies mostly with the Black and Sicilian cultures. When her European grandmother married her Black and Native American grandfather she was disowned by her family. Vanessa's maternal grandparents did not attend the wedding of her mother and father either.

Vanessa grew up in a primarily White affluent community with a very low crime rate and good schools. It wasn't until she was 11 that she realized that she would never be blonde haired and blue eyed like her friends and finally realized, "that could never happen for me". When she arrived at middle school, more students started to ask "what are you?" but she grew up in the same house so after some time, people knew who her parents were and that they were a mixed couple. In high school, she was involved in cheer leading and dated another mixed student – they are still together at this time.

Vanessa says they both look “Hispanic”. He attends college at a university back in her home state. She did apply to Big U as a high school Senior but was not admitted, writing her essay about being a multiracial student and how it excluded her from certain groups. Once she breaks the barriers of organizations, it also allows her to extend herself to more groups. She believes that she identifies with more people. At the junior college that she attended for two years, she joined an honor society and was the event coordinator. Otherwise, she worked and went to school, anticipating transferring to a four year college.

Currently, she lives with three freshmen because she made her decision to transfer so late, so was placed in supplemental housing. She says they are all still hung up on “high school stuff” like proms and homecomings.

Vanessa thinks it is hard being a student at Big U because of the curriculum. Being a multiracial student is even harder.

She states,

> Being a multiracial student it’s kind of almost alienating because people don’t know what I am so I don’t really fit into…I can’t go hang out with Black girls….like, what are you doing here? Can’t go into the Lounge, like, you need to leave. I just walk by and I get glared at, okay, I won’t go in. Boys are nice, girls aren’t so nice about being multiracial, I feel.

At Big U, she is involved in two student organizations, one of them she hasn’t done much with yet because of class. She has contemplated joining a Black organization but feels that she would need to go with someone. “I mean, I would go, I’m not uncomfortable around people. I just feel like if I walked in by myself they’d be like, the Latino meeting is over there. I would go with someone, not by myself”. She is very excited about finding a multiracial group on campus.

Describing herself racially, Vanessa says Black and White, unless she is trying to get to know people and then she describes all of her background as Native American,

Greek, Black, Sicilian. Sometimes she says mixed. If someone calls her an offensive word like "oreo", she doesn't really get offended. She primarily identifies with the Sicilian and Black cultures, it would be hard for her to choose one over the other, like "choosing one side of the family over the other".

When asked how she feels other students view her, Vanessa said,

> Well, I'm not White, but I'm also not Black, so I don't know how they view me. I think they just think – what is she? If I had to check one box on my Big U application, I would check Black because I'm not White, but I don't know if
>
> that's how other students view me. In the cafeteria the other day someone goes, are you Israeli?

She has learned many things about her racial identity up to this point. She believes being mixed is interesting. But, sometimes she goes to Italian functions and feels people staring. "And then by Black family doesn't make any big deal about it and I feel like it's more common to see mixed people on that side than the Italian side". She states that people often forget that she is mixed, "letting things slip around me, so it's very interesting to see what people think when they think no one is listening, or when they think no one Black is listening, and then you catch them and they're like, oh, I didn't mean that". She does not let things slide very easily when someone makes a racist joke and hates when people use "the N word". "When Black people do stupid things it reflects poorly on me, just like when Black people do stupid stuff". When discussing boundaries in terms of race, Vanessa said, "I don't want people to forget what I am because I'm proud of what I am, so I feel like I'm extra sensitive to race issues".

TRINITY

Trinity is an 18 year old first year student from a suburb of a large city in the south. She has medium brown skin and relaxed black hair. Her parents came from a city in the Midwest that was a German colony at one time, with a lot of mixed race people.

Trinity is lighter skinned with relaxed dark brown hair. Her great-grandmother was Native American on her mother's side; and her grandmother's mother was White. On her mother's side, her grandfather was very dark and as a result, so is her mother. On her father's side, his mother is very dark and father is very light skinned, and her father is also lighter skinned. Trinity's sister and mother are also darker skinned. "I never questioned why my mom was dark and I wasn't, that's just the way it was and I never thought about it until I got older and people started asking about it". Since her and her sister went to the same high school, she comments that often people do not know they are related. Trinity commented that at family reunions they do not even look like they are all related. Her mother and father raised their daughters in a predominately White neighborhood, and she feels that they "adopted to a White society, we never really had an African culture".

Trinity's mother works in a corporate environment and listens to country music. Her parents are divorced and she is not very close to her father at this time. Her father grew as a lighter skinned child across from the projects. His family didn't have a lot of money, but they weren't as poor as the people who lived near them. She believes that her father had some issues being accepted because of his phenotype in addition to being viewed as having money. It wasn't popular to be educated and to "put on airs" around other people.

As a child, Trinity grew up very involved in extracurricular activities, like Girl Scouts. She was often the only Black child there, but it didn't bother her. "I was raised around all different kinds of cultures and I respect that and I want to travel the world and meet tons of different people, but I feel like definitely the schools in my state feel like people naturally want to gravitate to what's comfortable for them". Her neighborhood was primarily White, and they could not afford to live in the area that they did if it was

not a suburb. In elementary school, she had one friend that was Latina and one that was Black and they stuck together as friends because they were the only children of color. "I realized early one that I wasn't like everyone else and I was probably gonna have to deal with that".

In high school she was involved with student council, basketball, Red Cross and an honor society. Most of the basketball team was from Nigeria and she had to adjust to what she terms, "the culture".

> When you play basketball, basketball is a culture, you have to have that mentality, that persona, and I was like, I'm scared, I can't do that…I wasn't used to being around Black people so I didn't act like them at all but they accepted me, and I was the smart one on the team and I tried to help them out with grades and stuff.

Trinity chose Big U for the particular major that she wanted to pursue, although her father wanted her to go to an Ivy League institution. She is extremely close to her mother and sister, and since her parents are divorced, she chose to stay close to where she grew up. She thought Big U was extremely liberal, "…that's what I really liked about it because I'm still trying to find out who I am because I don't have a set definition, you know". She was surprised by the lack of African Americans at the school, but says that she was "used to it from high school, it's what I grew up with". She is already involved with an organization for first year students, tried for a space on the governing council and is exploring a few other options.

When talking about herself racially, Trinity usually tells people that she is African American, although inevitably, she gets asked "and what else". Because both of her parents are of mixed racial backgrounds, she finds herself going through the entire lineage for people when they ask this question. "I go through the whole explanation for people because they don't understand; they want it to be a Black and White thing. So I describe myself as African American and that's fine on paper but until they look at me they're gonna want an extra…that's when I'll go through".

Trinity has tried several different groups thus far in college: a freshmen professional group and a women's organization of which she is currently an active member; and tried applying to the governing body of her major college of which she was not accepted her first year and an international group which she went to a few meetings.

She is thinking about seeking out a social student organization that has lots of different majors and students.

SUMMARY

Each of the eight participants shared childhood stories, critical incidents and college experiences. In the next chapter, specific instances of racial identity will be analyzed within Wijeyesignhe's Factor Model of Multiracial Identity (FMMI) with the addition of college young adult socialization. The intersection of Black identity, White identity and finally the convergence into a multiracial identity will also be discussed. Power as a dynamic of which the participants sometimes had and other times felt that they did not will be a point of analysis. All of these factors converge into a valuable lens in which to view Black-White students on how they see the world and why; and how time spent in a student organization can help to further shape their identities.

Chapter Five: Data Analysis

The Factor Model of Multiracial Identity (FMMI) by Wijeyesinghe is a useful framework to analyze the eight students' experiences from childhood to young adulthood, their college experiences inside and outside of student organizations, their level of involvement on campus which may have been impacted by how they view themselves racially and socially, and the affect on racial identity. The FMMI allows a fluidity between factors and provides natural categories for coding.

Racial identity "refers to the dimension of a person's overall self-concept that is grounded in his or her experiences as a member of a broad racial group" (Wallace, 2001, p. 35). This study purports that these experiences include engagement in student organizations. As the study by Harper (2007) concluded, college experiences and young adult socialization should be an extension of the early experiences and socialization factor of the FMMI. This research confirms that college experiences are a significant factor in how Black-White multiracial students interpret, analyze and act upon their racial identity.

Racial identity can be very fluid, and as Wijeyesinghe's (2001) study concluded, people move between factors or can experience many of the factors simultaneously. The FMMI is not a linear or stage model, it is centered around racial identity with each factor impacting it differently and with differing intensities depending on the situation. The model assumes that people can make choices about their identity, and the meaning behind their choices depends on their experiences. The stories of Black-White college students' choices on which organization that they choose to become involved in and whether it is impacted by or because of racial identity has proven to be a salient topic of this study. Each of the eight students was involved in at least one student organization and was able to speak directly and indirectly on why they chose the groups that they did, issues

(positive and negative) that they have had in the organizations, and what other types of groups they may be seeking. Additionally, all eight of their stories dealt directly with being a multiracial student in some way: whether it was feeling more comfortable in certain settings with other students; wanting a more diverse, social or a professional group; how they felt uncomfortable in places and spaces on campus; problems with roommates based on racial interactions; and how their families have impacted their foundation of racial identity.

The interviews in which each participants discussed why they chose the group that they became engaged in reinforces student development theory (Astin 1985; Kinzie, 2009; Kuh, 2009; & Tinto 1993) and racial climate theory (Hurtado, 1992; & Locks, Hurtado, Bowman & Oseguera, 2008;). Both of these areas of study show that students who are more engaged on campus have healthier psychosocial development (Cooper, Healy & Simpson, 1994), exercise critical thinking skills, tolerance and leadership (Cooper et. al 1994; Gellin, 2003; Kuh, 2005; & Pascarella, 2005) and a positive campus racial climate improves retention and makes students of color feel more at ease and focused on their college career (Eimers, 2001). All eight students considered themselves people of color, but also embraced their Black, White and multiracial identities sometimes separately and sometimes simultaneously. The following chapter will analyze the FMMI factors as related to the interviews with the largest additional section of college experiences and young adult socialization as its' own category instead of an extension of early experiences as Harper (2007) suggests. The concepts of Blackness and Whiteness proved to be large sections of racial ancestry, but also could be fit into cultural attachment in regards to how the students took cues on what these identities meant to them. Through intersectionality Black identity, White identity, class and power/choice

will also be explored as another area that was shown to impact how the student's chose to become engaged in student organizations.

The following chart shows each student, the number of organizations, the number of organizations that they are investigating, and the number of groups the student joined and left.

Student Name	**Number of student organizations actively involved**	**Number of student organizations currently investigating, but not actively involved**	**Number of organizations the student tried but left**
Felicia (female)	1 (officer in Black professional organization)	1 (women's group, social fraternity)	0
Michael (male)	1 (student government)	0	1 (Black first year student org)
Lisa (female)	2 (student government, bible study)	0	0
Jaiden (female)	2 (violence prevention, Black professional organization)	0	1 (Black social group)
Bill (male)	0	1 (professional)	1 (international)
Darryl (male)	1 (Asian)	0	2 (tied to major, diversity)
Vanessa (female)	2 (alumni, event planning)	1 (race based)	0
Trinity (female)	2 (freshmen professional organization, women's organization)	1 (social)	2 (governing body, international)

Figure 2. Chart of Student Organization Involvement for Eight Student Participants.

THE FMMI

Although all eight factors of the FMMI are reflected in interviews with each student, some are more salient than others. Because the model also accounts for a fluidity between factors, the coding of the interviews could be accomplished in multiple ways, with an excerpt double or triple coded. For purposes of analyzing and coding, some of the factors have been collapsed into one larger category. They are presented below in order of relevance to the eight students:

- racial ancestry including Blackness and Whiteness;
- other social identities (intersectionality) including Black identity, White identity, class and power/choice;
- college experiences and young adulthood socialization added from Harper (2007) including campus racial climate;
- childhood: conversations about race between parent and child, cultural attachment including activities engaged in as a child and familial cues given on relating to culture; early experience and socialization;
- social and historical context including "what are you?" and responding to racist jokes;
- physical appearance or phenotype including Black hair versus White hair;

Political awareness and spirituality were discussed somewhat by the interviewees, but not to the level to determine them relevant to this study. Each of the interviews was coded to determine themes relevant to the FMMI and to seek potential new categories. The emergence of college experiences was consistent with Harper's (2007) suggestion to add this to the FMMI. Also the time spent in college on various co-curricular activities was also significant because each student was active in at least one student organization. This makes it relevant to identity development during college. To further this finding and

recommendation for further study, the inclusion of the theme in the coding and an analysis is included.

Racial Ancestry

Racial ancestry is often determined by what the parents decide. Most of the students had a clear picture of their racial background from their parents, sometimes with stories and history from other family members, like grandparents. Two of the students had White (one Sicilian) mothers and Black fathers; two students had a White fathers and a Black mother (one Jamaican); three students had mixed Black-White parents (one Black and Irish, one Chinese and Black); and one student had a Sicilian mother and a Native American, Greek, Black and English father.

Seven of the eight students grew up in primarily White neighborhoods. Six of the eight students spoke about being middle to upper class. Each student was able to give the racial background of their parents and some could go back to the race of grandparents and great-grandparents. Each student had a response to how they categorize themselves racially, and all eight said primarily "Black" when asked but if someone were to really want the entire story they would give them the whole family racial history. The coding of this section included specific referrals to racial ancestry when describing themselves and their families and when each participant was asked to describe themselves racially. All eight of the students knew of their racial ancestry from their parents and also took visual and cultural cues from them, like Lisa, who felt it was obvious what she would choose to be,

> If people ask me I always say I'm mixed or bi-racial, but then at other times people are like, well you're not White, so a lot of times I say, yeah I'm Black, there's my Black mom and Black family, so I'm Black.

Other students were coached on what to say and how to say it. Jaiden's comments on how she describes herself racially were clearly informed by what her mother had taught her early on in childhood.

> I always say Jamaican-White. I think they both thought it was important that I grow up with both cultures equally so that I wasn't just immersed in the White culture, which is interesting to talk about, the White culture, or the Jamaican culture, but yeah I had a good mixture of both.
>
> It's just about not letting Black people tell me I'm not Black enough and not letting White people tell me I'm not White, because I am, I'm both, fully, you know what I mean? So they really instilled in me to know myself. I guess that was the best piece of advice that stuck with me.

Even though seven of the students were raised in predominately White neighborhoods, they still knew that they were different racially than their friends and neighbors who lived around them. Two were heavily involved in cultural activities and with family who were Black, and so they felt that they were raised more "Black" than "White".

Lisa said,

> My grandma raised me till I was about five and then I moved back in with my mom, but I was pretty much raised Black…. I (lived in an) all White neighborhood. Maybe there was Hispanic, but it was pretty much all White, and my elementary school was all White. I think there were two Black kids in the whole school. I went to a Black church though.

Two of the students, Vanessa and Bill, had clear ethnic backgrounds of which they felt an enormous sense of pride, and explored this history through student organizations that they may have attempted to join for this factor. Vanessa is Sicilian and Black, and talked about trying out an Italian student organization event, but was turned off because people stared at her. She has clear perception of her history and knows that she too, "belongs" on the Sicilian side if she so chooses, despite her racial makeup.

> What I identify with the most would probably be the Sicilian and the Black because my grandma's family was from Europe and when she married my

> grandpa they disowned her, so we never knew that side of the family, so my dad's family has only been Black, so it's been that part of the family and then my mom's Sicilian family.

Racial ancestry is a powerful marker for many multiracial children, one to be intentionally discussed in the home to reinforce what the parent decides as most important. "Parents of biracial children have been urged to acknowledge the differences and to facilitate the formation of a sense of pride in the children's 'doubly rich' heritage" (Kerwin, et al., 1993). The participants in this study had clear indications and backgrounds from their parents on who they were racially, indicating conversations had occurred in the home prior to college. These conversations encouraged the students to think about their Blackness and Whiteness. Sometimes the students were forced to choose between their Blackness and Whiteness either by different sides of their families or when walking into a student organization meeting. If the students acted "too Black" or "too White" they might receive criticism from their parents or peers. All of the participants had a clear sense of their heritage and for the most part, knew their familial origins. The knowledge of both sides of their racial identity also created a struggle for the students on where they might fit in best. Sometimes the participants felt most comfortable in a Black organization meeting, and others avoided these groups for fear of being accepted. Knowing their backgrounds helped with their identity process in terms of where they came from racially, but it also constructed pressure to choose one identity over the other. Rarely did the students talk about being accepted for being multiracial, and that in itself was enough. The lack of multiracial organizations on campus and recognition by the multicultural center did not help the students discover more about themselves, it further compounded the need to choose in almost every situation in which the students found themselves.

Blackness

None of the students experienced a complete Black identity as outlined by Cross' (1971) Racial Identity Scale or Jackson's Black Identity Development (2001) yet, they all identified as Black more often than not when asked. Even though they may have said "I'm Black" some of the participants were also hesitant to relate to the Black community because of racism, social and historical context and how they perceived the Black community. Only Michael and Jaiden seemed to have a positive, healthy connection with the Black community. Michael is an African and African American studies major and Jaiden has aspirations of helping the Black community through her major of Psychology, at the same time she also talked about not being "Black enough" around her Black friends, and about being called pale face.

Peterson-Lewis and Bratton (2004) conducted a study with 56 Black high school students on what "acting Black meant". The authors concluded the five dimensions on which authentic Blackness is judged: (a) academic or scholastic dimension (not going to class, not doing homework) (b) aesthetic-stylish dimension (listening rap music, dressing in hip hop clothing (c) behavioral dimension (Ebonics or slang, being violent) (d) dispositional dimension (being disrespectful, loud in public and (e) the impressionistic dimension (giving the impression of being rude or wild). The authors also discuss social class as a factor being linked to being perceived as more authentically Black. Because of the conflation of race and class in America, those with a poor or lower social class were seen as more Black and those with more affluence were linked to a White culture. The media plays a large role in creating these distinctions.

Peterson-Lewis and Bratton (2004) go on to say,

> For instance, for middle-class blacks and black-white biracials, their class and racial distinctions yield life experiences that differ significantly from what is considered the norm. As a result of their class status, black middle-class Americans must often negotiate life in both black and white spaces and frequently

> encounter both spatial and experiential differences from their black working and lower-class counterparts. Similarly, black-white biracials must negotiate both of their racial heritages and manage their identities in both public and private ways. The experiences of these individuals indicate that living between the lines of socially constructed notions of blackness carries a number of social and psychological implications. These realities raise questions about the degree to which both groups feel attached to other blacks, as well as the degree to whichother blacks feel attached to them. Hence, this may influence the degree to which they perceive themselves and other blacks as part of the fictive black ‘‘family.’’

Michael described his view of what Blackness means by discussing the hip hop culture and what it means to him to be associated with it,

> Hip-hop culture and Black culture have become one, and if you are not necessarily not hip-hop then you're kind of like outside of what's typically thought of the Black culture or whatever. But even though I like hip-hop, a lot of the hip-hop is underground stuff, but I don't really listen to a lot of mainstream stuff just because it's not music that's withstanding to me. I was thinking about if it was a problem or not that Black has become synonymous with hip-hop, especially in terms of your racial identity, because if you don't perform this hip-hop identity, you're not associated with the Black identity…… I remember sitting down at breakfast and this guy was talking some racial something and I said something contrary to what he said, and he looked me in the eye – he's a full-Black guy – he's like, you're a half-White guy, right? And I was like, yeah. And he was like, oh, see, that's why. Like, that's why I couldn't identify with whatever he was saying because I was half-White. So then, I realized that my Blackness wasn't Black enough in some situations…..

Felicia took a Black power class but concluded that she has differing views of the rest of the Black students who were also present. Bill discussed the culture of Blackness in terms of athletes and rappers, with whom he did not want to be associated with at any time. Lisa experienced a negative reaction because she did not back one of the Black candidates in a student government election.

Felicia talked her experiences in a Black power class,

> We were talking and one of the issues was in the Black community, Black individuals feel that, especially in class, if you're a Black person and you get up and speak, you're representing the entire Black community. And a lot of the Blacks are, that's true, that's true because they don't see a lot of us and so when one of us gets up and talks they think that that's the view or that's how all Black

> people act. So I raised my hand and I had the opposite view. So as I was talking, as I was saying this, some of the Black girls were, oh well she's mixed, so it's different. So I realized that I think the reason I don't feel socially as connected to the Black community is because that division with views.

Bill commented,

> And yes I'm part of the Black culture, and that's filled with people aspiring to be rap artists, superstar athletes. With the abundance use of the 'N' word, which really bugs me, I've no choice but to be in that category because I am of African American descent, but I'm not going to portray myself like that, you know. Here on campus, and probably other locations here, and yes I can also say that the Blacks that I see on campus they can also fit the stereotype also because I'm pretty sure the football team is a majority of African Americans. I can say the basketball team is majority of African Americans either. I see that African Americans are along that line of the style that they see rappers wear. Do I wear what the rappers would wear? No, I don't buy the hundred dollar pair of shoes, that's a waste of money to me.

The internalized racism in Bill's comments are evident in the stereotypes of what athletes do and what rappers wear. Internalized racism is the belief in the stereotypes of ourselves and those in our communities and accepting the images in the media, news stories and folklore. It also perpetuates the privilege of White skin and the power that all White people have, whether they are anti-racist or not. Each student held differing thoughts about Blackness. Most of the participants were asked what they "were" by other Black students more than any other race of people. All of these instances demonstrate the difficulty of embracing only Blackness when being a Black-White mixed student. Although one can say they are Black, to be monoracially Black is a different story.

Darryl also had thoughts on his Blackness,

> I just always kind of felt like when I'm there with them that they kind of almost, they don't really think of me as Black but they kind of think of me as taking advantage of things that are for Blacks. You see what I'm saying, like the scholarship thing maybe, cause it's not necessarily like my skin color and my race thing, it's more of like I didn't really come from an area that was not affluent, like I wasn't from a poor area, like I came from a pretty affluent area, not that my

> parents were rich or anything, but I didn't like have to struggle like some of them did. …
>
> Felicia said,
>
> I know some of my really best friends here are Black, but we're all on the same page. They think I'm…well, unless they're Black I don't think they really know I'm mixed. I've actually…maybe a handful of my White friends ever ask, or they just realize because they know my parents or something. Those questions really don't come up when I'm around a lot of my White peers. When I'm around my Black peers it does all the time. I've never really thought about that, but I've only been asked maybe a handful of times. So, it's definitely more of an issue in the Black community than in the White community.

For the eight participants, the struggle of being "raced" as Black but having a more "white" experience became clear. Thus, even though many of the parents had conversations about race, they also lived in predominately White communities and involved their children in activities that needed money in order to participate. Identifying as Black because of the obvious physical marker did not also align with the political and social connection that also accompanies being Black in America.

Jaiden talked about friends that she had growing up, and in certain instances she was never quite "Black enough",

> I mean I definitely think it was like humor, everybody was just kidding, but still it's just like that sense of not being part of the group really. I mean at the end of the day they were still my friends and it didn't change our relationship, but you know those little comments like, you're not fully Black so you don't understand, things like that. I still get those comments all the time. I guess my Black brothers they would call me like Oreo and pale-face. My mom's favorite name for me was pale-face, which she was just kidding. It doesn't sound like it was in good humor, but it was.
>
> Michael said,
>
> When I started reading Malcolm X and Cornell West and all that, I was automatically tagged as like a Black scholar, he's reading all this kind of stuff, but when I went home my sister and her friends, who went to the local school, they had a large Black chunk, like I was the White one again. When I was at school I was the Black guy, when I was at home, even though I was doing the same things, I was the White one. And like my sister, she would tell me. I was driving one

> day and my sister saw me driving and when I got home she was like, Michael, I saw you and you looked like a real Black guy. I was like, do I ordinarily not look Black? Like I don't get it, it was especially weird for me since she's mixed too. I don't get this, but okay.

In order to fully understand the scope of "Blackness" in the Black-White multiracial experience, a more in depth study of what "Blackness" means is warranted. If race is socially constructed, then the concept of what Black is can also have a very fluid meaning. There are multiple intersections of Blackness as well, including: class, education, skin color, what is "authentic" Blackness and what is not and should it be based on oppression, and the variability of the Black experience. All of the participants had stories about the authenticity of their own Blackness and whether it was "enough". None of the students had a desire to change how they identified or looked physically. An acceptance of being a multiracial Black-White student and what that meant on a college campus affected which groups they chose to join and how they chose to carry out their college careers as being an involved student on campus. Internalized racism is the process of valuing the dominant culture, the White culture, over communities of color. It also leads to the acceptance of the racism that is perpetuated by images in the media and believing the common stereotypes, whether it is consciously or unconsciously. If a student such as Bill internalized his racism against the Black community, then the dominance of the White community prevails. Blackness was a definite factor to each of the student's multiple dimensions of their identities. The concept of Whiteness was equally explored with the participants and presents an interesting counterpoint to that of internalized racism. If these students perpetuated their internal oppression, they also had the ability to embrace their Whiteness, whether by "passing" through their phenotype or "acting White".

Whiteness

Because the students in this study were multiracially mixed with Black and White, and sometimes with other ethnicities or races, the concept of Whiteness was also important to investigate. In popular culture, Whiteness is associated with goodness or purity. On the opposite side, Blackness is defined as dark or evil. For some students, they felt more White than Black. That which is not White is often referred to as nonwhite or exotic. "White privilege" means that one has the opportunities in society not afforded to those who are not White.

Jaiden commented on her Whiteness,

> It's hard to define White culture, like what that means, and that's almost like saying everybody else… It's like White culture is kind of American, and that's like saying everybody else isn't American if you define it that way, which isn't really right to me cause I think different races are American. It's kind of complex to me. But, yeah, I think it would be a lot easier to define my Blackness.

As with Blackness, Whiteness is also difficult to define. Peggy McIntosh's (1988) now famous work lists out the benefits of living in a White skin, including assurance that they will not be followed around by store clerks, that people will not cross the street to avoid them at night and quiet networking that results in multiple advantages. Some participants commented on how visually they were perceived as White or Black in certain situations, but most had not explored the concept of Whiteness and what it meant in their lives until we discussed it in an interview.

Jaiden said,

> Whiteness…I guess when my friends say I'm acting White or the White side of me, when I'm listening to country music or eating food that Black people don't really eat, like mayo or little things like that that Black people say they don't eat, or I'm a very outdoorsy person. My Black friends don't like to be at the lake or go horseback riding, so I guess to them that's what my Whiteness means. Me personally, I don't really know how to define Whiteness. It's a really hard question.

What is clear from the interviews is that these students did have some White privileges, but were more familiar or comfortable talking about their Blackness.

Felicia talked about how she sees her Whiteness,

> I think it would probably be more of a White lens now that I'm in that (Black Power) class and I'm seeing I do not agree with this, I do not agree with that, and I've actually stopped raising my hand a little bit.

Michael discussed his "White" side,

> I had to start thinking about Whiteness in the same way, and like I said, because no matter where I go, this brown skin marks me. Like, I will never, ever, ever, no matter how much I try, completely be accepted in the White race, like I can't pass for White if I tried, you know what I mean? So, I've been having to think lately about how do I define my Whiteness, because for the longest time I would identify with the Black race and I feel like obviously it's in me and obviously other people are marking it in me too, but I feel like… I feel like that is the thing, like if I was to completely like, I guess, act "White", just try to identify with the White culture then people would say I'm denying my Blackness, you know? Like I wanna be White because I feel like it's superior or something. I feel like I would be chastised for that too, but on the same hand it's impossible for me to try. Like, with my White side, I just really don't know what to do with it. I don't know how it should be placed or how it should like influence me and my daily interaction. I know it's there but I just don't know what to do with it.
>
> (Interviewer) What does Whiteness mean anyway?
>
> (Michael) I don't know. I guess Whiteness would mean having that hegemonic invisible power in society, like you're normalized by your Whiteness, and I'm not normalized.

The students who were able to speak to their Whiteness had definitions of what they thought was their White side, or knew what acting "White meant" or performing Whiteness. As Dyer (1997) states, "The sense of whites as non raced is most evident in the absence of reference to whiteness in the habitual speech and writing of white people in the West" (p.2). Although some of the students had thought about it, like Michael, none of the participants ever said they were White when asked unless they were combining it with Black and White, although they readily said "Black". The concept of

Whiteness presents a conundrum in that it was easier for the participants to claim their Blackness, more difficult to define their Whiteness, and seemed to be most often caught in the middle of how and what to say about their racial identity. They were presented as people of color by phenotype and this will most likely always be the case no matter what group they decide to join. The situation of whether they were Black enough to join a certain group or not White enough to be in another is something that all eight of the participants remarked about at some point during the interviews. The power dynamic of each of those scenarios presents subordinated and dominant identities.

Other social identities: Intersectionality

Intersectionality is a useful analytical tool for multiracial identity studies because it examines the complexities of a number of different angles (gender, power, racial identity, privilege, socio-economics etc) (Crenshaw, 1990-1991). The study of intersectionality began with a study of "race and gender dimensions of violence against women of color" by Kimberle Crenshaw (p.1242). Crenshaw acknowledges that the dimensions of race and gender are only two facets in her original article which could be explored. Class and sexuality are of equal importance when accounting for multiple grounds of identity when considering how the social world is constructed (Crenshaw, 1990-1991).

The participants in this study were from middle to upper class as well as multiracial. The intersection of class and race is a multifaceted topic and beyond the scope of this study. However, it would be a fascinating study to review class and multiraciality. Each of the participants spoke about their neighborhoods growing up and having the opportunity to be involved in various activities. This may not have been the case if the students were from lower income neighborhoods and did not have the experiences of becoming involved. They may not have had the confidence to try new

organizations or know how to seek out different groups if they were not afforded the opportunities. The involvement in high school lead to the continuation of seeking something on campus.

Intersectionality allows an individual to occupy multiple facets of who they are simultaneously. Jones and McEwen (2001) also developed the Model of Multiple Identities, on which Wijeyesinghe's FMMI is based. The MMI utilized ten undergraduate students and explored the multiple dimensions of their identities and how it impacted their college experience. Abes, Jones and McEwen (2007) reworked the model to include meaning making or how context can shape and influence who we are. Those participants in the Abes, Jones and McEwen study who understood their complex identities and meaning making were more able to grasp the concept of fluidity of identity.

The intersection of Black and a White identity, sometimes results in a multiracial identity and sometimes creates a pull toward one or the other. Intersectionality provides a lens through which we can examine the concept of "Blackness" and what that means to these students as well as the concept of "Whiteness". The makeup of these dimensions appear to be different than what a person of only African American or Caucasian descent may make of these meanings. The participants in this study all had to understand on some level their Blackness and their Whiteness. The exploration of both of these identities would be an important addition to further research with suggestions on how Black-White students might come to understand each side of themselves and how that could contribute to a positive racial identity and positive college experience. In classroom consideration of these topics through race courses and programs which surround these topics could be introduced as a part of the curriculum. The racial identity formation for these students is so complex because they must operate in two or

sometimes three or more different worlds and are forced to choose. Sometimes this choice is made on their own accord, and other times the choice is made for them.

Power/choice

In terms of the intersections of Blackness and Whiteness, power/choice was an interesting dynamic to introduce to the students to assess their thoughts. Some of the students were taking specific African American related classes and learning a lot about pieces of their history. Pointing out to them how power/choice interplays with situational identity was a great place to begin to explore how they might claim power in some instances, but be subordinated in others. In most instances, the students did not have much power because the choice was already made for them. These choices included their ability to walk into an all Black organization and not feel uncomfortable or that they did not belong. In joining White organizations, the students were always seen as the person of color. With this lack of power, also comes lack of choice. With the lack of choice, the privilege that the students had in other ways, such as class, were counterbalanced.

Felicia on her power status,

> (Interviewer) Would you say you don't have as much power in that (Black Power) class then either?
>
> (Felicia) No. Like a lot of my views, people just don't agree with what I say, but in the Black professional group, yes. I think maybe there's another mixed girl on the board. I don't know, it's just a different, not climate, it's just…

Jaiden, discussed her power status,

> Okay, yeah, I guess in the instances where my friend said I wasn't quite Black enough sometimes, I guess they held power in that kind of…just in that moment, I guess, because they were defining what Black was and I wasn't it, and I didn't get to decide what Black was even though I always do. In my mind, I always define what Blackness is, but in that moment they had power in defining what Blackness is and I didn't fit it. On the other side, I wasn't White either, just the other side of the coin I guess.

Michael talked about his power status,

> That's something I've really been having to think a lot about myself because I feel how I define my Blackness that I'm completely okay with that. When I walk
>
> through my daily life, I'm okay with how I view myself as an African American but when I come to situations where people aren't mixed… So let's say when I go to a group of Black people, then I feel like I'm the White one no matter how secure I feel about myself as an African American, I feel like I'm always viewed as the one who is the outsider. It's like the opposite if I'm in a group of all White people, like I'm the extreme Black person, especially if I'm the only one like I'm supposed to be a representative for the race. I feel like I do have power within myself to be comfortable with the way I define it, but in those group situations it's like what can I do to change these people's perceptions any way. Am I supposed to act a certain way to prove that I'm not whatever they think I am? I don't feel like I should have to do that either. Like I said, I'm comfortable with myself the way I am. So if I go through my daily life, I'm fine with it and you can think what you want, but I'm not going to try and change your mind out of it.

Power/choice is an interesting topic to explore in terms of Black-White identity. What the participants were taught as children profoundly impacted how they responded to race and how they acknowledged their racial ancestry. How the students were treated by their peers affected the little amount of choice they had. Ultimately, feeling subordinate or dominant did have some affect on what groups the participants decided to join, leave or investigate.

College Experiences

Being engaged in a student organization in college can bring certain maturities in terms of values, leadership and critical thinking (Astin 1985; Kinzie, 2009; Kuh, 2009; & Tinto 1993). For multiracial students, what they chose to become involved in or not to investigate was often influenced by race and how comfortable they felt in the group.

> Michael talked about his experiences joining a Black organization in his first
>
> year of college, which he later left,
>
> When I was a freshman, I was in a Black organization and they had like a little sub thing just for freshmen, that was freshman team. I think that same year I went to a couple meetings for an African American male group, but I left the other Black organization because every time we would have like the freshman meetings, every time I walked into the Black Lounge like I was stared at, and I

> don't understand why. It always felt like it was because I am the one who sticks out. I mean, I don't really feel that comfortable going to the Lounge now if it's like a lot of people in there. I would just always feel awkward in those kinds of situations…

If the participant felt unwelcome or conspicuous walking into an all Black meeting (either in their own mind or it was obvious), or felt singled out as the only person of color in the room (also obvious but perhaps uncomfortable nonetheless) they were less likely to go back to that meeting or did not want to attend by themselves without a friend's support.

Felicia talked about one of her first experiences with an all Black retreat and how she felt and how she would treat multiracial students in her group,

> I went to the new Black student lock-in for the Black President's retreat, and when I came like, and it's probably this new Black student lock-in, like nobody really talked to me. It was weird, and I didn't know a lot of the Black students here yet, just the ones in my major, and they weren't really inviting. I felt uncomfortable. I really did feel uncomfortable because I only knew… I knew like here and there, a couple of people, and they said hi, but I didn't really have anybody to sit and chat with. So, yeah, it was really uncomfortable.

The college experience thus far for many of the students in this study also brought reflection upon their childhood, what they were taught by their parents, and how they chose to respond to race. College is a time to seek out different experiences and look into options of what to pursue in working life. Each student had a story about how their multiraciality influenced their college experience. Some became very involved in certain organizations and others pulled away because of the treatment that they received.

Darryl spoke about his membership in an Asian student organization. He describes his involvement as sometimes being the "token" Black guy.

> I don't really have that many Black friends around this school, right, so for me to go to a Black association, not really knowing anyone there so that's already going to make me uncomfortable, right, even if I was Black I wouldn't really know anyone there. At least at the Asian student organization I had some friends that I could go to the first couple meetings with and that could like help me meet other people. So, that kind of helped me too. It's like that, right, if you don't really

know people in the organization then it's kind of hard, and that makes it even harder.

There is a critical connection between student organizations and campus diversity efforts. According to Kuk (2010), groups can impact the institution in the following ways: negatively through behaviors that hinder diversity such as unsaid policies not to recruit students of color or negligence in engaging in behavior that they should know better not to do, like hosting a Blackface party. Impacting the university through a null relationship in which they make no effort to forward the institution's diversity goals. For example, the organization may not include any language on recruitment materials that states they are open to all students. Organizations can also make positive contributions to the diversity efforts of a university through contributive events like cultural programs; additive programs that go beyond the typical cultural events such as inviting a lesbian couple to a social work organization to speak about adoption; or transformational activities that make active connections between diversity goals and student groups. One example may include the LGBTQ group and an African American fraternity co-sponsoring a dialogue about being gay in the Black community. The highest level of connecting student groups with a university's diversity plan is social action in which all groups are aware of social justice issues and take active steps in everything that they do to incorporate and analyze their role in forwarding this goal.

For multiracial students, the need for involvement in student organizations seems more critical than ever before. Not only the leadership, critical thinking and positive impacts of engagement is crucial, but the potential connections and explorations that can be made for these students. If these students are recognized on campuses in places and spaces, in addition to becoming active members in raising awareness about multiracial issues the gap for the fastest growing population on our campuses begins to close. Multiracial students must be allowed to exhibit all facets of their identities and student

organizations could be just the venue in which this could be realized. In order for this to occur, the climate of the university must also change.

Campus racial climate

Many of the students discussed the campus racial climate of Big U as socially segregated by race. For students of color, a hostile racial climate can affect many aspects of the student experience as well as make it more difficult to retain them.

Darryl said,

> I would say that I was a lot more open to races and stuff and kind of encouraged diversity then when I came to college, but I feel like when I came to college I became a lot more segregated, it became a lot tougher to be with different groups because everything here – there's a Hispanic Student Association , Asian Student Association, Black Student Association, and even the majority of the fraternities, right, you have to be a certain race to be that. They don't flat-out call it like a White fraternity but more or less that's what it is. So I'm not White enough to get into the White fraternity, I'm not Black enough to get into the Black fraternity, so where do I fit?

Setting up groups and centers by race was most likely a direct product of a hostile racial climate at Big U that has deep historical ties. However, the presence of these entities sends a message to multiracial students that they must choose one identity over the other in order to be a part of these activities or to take advantage of the programs and services offered.

According to Roper and McAloney (2010),

> While the creation of these centers and programs has been crucial in addressing the history of discrimination among collegiate institutions, as well as increasing opportunities for success of underrepresented racial groups, we are at a place where we need to enter uncomfortable territory and have serious conversation about the future of such centers and programs.

All eight participants talked about the presence of differing monoracial organization, centers and programs for students set up according to race: Black student

lockins, Asian organizations, Greek organizations of different races, Latino cultural events, celebrations of racial holidays or months.

Vanessa said,

> I have friends that are in sororities but they're all White, and I don't know if I went in… You know how you can tell if people are like, what are you doing here, like you don't belong.

Trinity commented on how she viewed the recruiting materials of the university,

> I think for a university that talks about diversity, it's extremely segregated. There are so many clubs for Asians and for different things. Of course they're going to let you be in the club, they say, oh yeah it's Asian but you can be in it cause you can't say no, but of course you see the picture, it's all Asians, and you're kind of like, ummm. But I think it is. There are definitely a lot of multi-cultural acceptance. People accept people, that's not the issue, they're not prejudiced, but they would just gravitate more towards what they're used to, and I do think it's natural.

Rarely did the students discuss membership in a group dedicated to diversity, although a few of them were specifically seeking groups that reflected this mission. Programs or centers dedicated to monoracial students offer them a means to continue to explore their identities.

Lisa said,

> I'm like, wow I changed from all White (high school) to all Black (college), but I definitely would say Big U is definitely segregated and that I don't see many Whites and Blacks intermingling, and if you do it's just that sole Black person in a White organization or that sole…you rarely see a sole White person in a Black organization but it happens. I do think it's a little more segregated than high school. In high school there wasn't a South Asian group or there wasn't an Indian Student Association, everyone just kind of meshed together in the big organizations, the debate clubs, Spanish club. It wasn't like your heritage club like African Student Association, Black Student Associations; it was much more wide and open for everyone to join.

The lack of these opportunities for multiracial students leaves a wide gap in which the growing population of students of mixed heritage could also be raising awareness about their backgrounds and fitting into campus spaces and places in a more comfortable

manner. Campuses lacking any of these programs or services are essentially alienating a whole population of people who may not feel that they fit in anywhere on campus. Roper and McAloney (2010) present the question to student affairs professionals regarding the ethics of creating identity dilemmas for multiracial students with the current frame of cultural programs. Although the need for these centers and programs cannot be disputed for underrepresented students, the lack of inclusion of multiracial students does not complete the mission of universities to be an open place for all students. Students arriving on our campuses come with a variety of backgrounds and knowledge. How these students grew up, assumptions they have, and confidence in who they are as people is an important aspect to consider.

Childhood

Cultural attachment and early experiences and socialization were found to be foundational elements that impacted how the students viewed themselves racially and culturally. These factors are collapsed into one larger category because of the common theme found of each as childhood experiences. Parents were a large influencer on each of the three factors, also making them a common theme. The parents coached their children on responding to racial inquiries, gave them cues about race based on the neighborhood where they chose to live, the racial makeup of the schools the children attended, what religious background they passed to their children, conversations they had about race, what they ate, who visited the home, the race of the friends the parents had, the extracurricular activities in which the parents enrolled their children. All of these childhood dynamics affected how the students viewed themselves and how they chose to respond, or not, to race. Certain instances of the above factors positioned the students as being the “only one”.

Quintana et. al (2006) differentiated culture from racial socialization as related to parenting, stating that culture was the presence of toys, books and clothing in the home; while socialization by race included parents preparing their children for racial bias and promoting racial mistrust. In this study, cultural attachment referenced activities that parents involved their children in which were primarily sports related; and cues that parents gave on how to relate to the differing cultures in the home.

Conversations about race

Conversations about race can be one of the most important factors for multiracial children. Jaiden and Bill had specific instances about their familial conversations about race. Because children take cues from the parents and relatives around them, and because what parents sometimes do and say can be different, clarifying with children how they can respond to racial inquiries and giving them correct terminology is important. Because the conversations surrounding race have been shown to make a critical difference in raising multiracial children (Kerwin, et al., 1993), this section has been included in the findings. Parents looking for suggestions on raising healthy children into healthy adults could be assured that the conversations they conduct with their children can lead to more positive experiences that their young adult would have in college, a critical growth and learning period. Adolescence is a critical time for young people, and for biracial children in particular. Acknowledging all racial backgrounds and instilling a sense of pride have been shown to be critical tools in the self esteem and development of biracial children, as well as being able to hold critical conversations about race (Kerwin, Ponterotto, Jackson & Harris, 1992).

Jaiden commented on the conversations that she had with their siblings and parents about race,

> We definitely had conversations about race, but not so much about the differences between my brothers and sister and I, not in that sense. Only in the sense like of preparing me for what obstacles I would face outside of family. Honestly, when I see my immediate family, it's hard to say you don't see color, but in my family I only identify their race to give people a sense of who they are. Other than that I would say I have three brothers and a sister, so race in the family isn't important to me at all. But yes we definitely had discussions about race to prepare me for maybe this group of people won't be as accepting of me as this group, just to prepare me for anything.

Bill commented,

> I guess for me, I'm not looking for that safety of always having to relate to my culture. I get that from my mom and dad. My dad can tell me about how it was for him having to work, since he came from the projects, having to go to a prestigious White community to be a butler for a White family and making up their bed and all the other stuff he had to do. I can go to my mom and dad and always hear about what it was to be Black, but I don't need to get a reinforcement for that from other people who can also relate because again I'm not looking for that safety to try to relate to my culture because I get that from my parents.

Having conversations about race creates children with more ability to discuss race and to form their own theories and actions regarding who they would like to be. Children who have more conversations with their families about being multiracial are more likely to be comfortable in multiple racial scenarios and typically are comfortable identifying as multiracial as well (Kerwin, et al., 1993).

Cultural attachment

Cultural attachment are cultural cues that a multiracial person is exposed to in childhood and adulthood. These attachments can include certain toys, food or celebrations and can be situational. How one reacts and acts in certain situations can be impacted from certain cultural attachments over others. Parents impact cultural attachment by exposing their children to different activities, having certain toys or foods in the home and encouraging diverse friendships to learn about other cultures. Sometimes subtle cues are given and other times overt cues about how the child should

act in certain situations, language spoken at home, which religious ceremonies a family chooses to attend, and how the family interacts with extended family (or not).

Activities

Many of the students had parents that made an effort to include them in multiple activities growing up, in which they were exposed to many different people. Sometimes, they were the only multiracial or child of color in the activity and that has impacted what types of organizations that they prefer to seek. Therefore, Trinity and Lisa have a definite preference to be in diverse organizations.

Trinity spoke about how she was raised,

> I don't feel any like…I mean, I do feel pride, I mean African American, but I don't feel like I have to identify with that because I wasn't raised like that. I was raised around all different kinds of cultures and I respect that, and I want to travel the world and meet tons of different people, but I feel like definitely schools in Texas it seems like people naturally want to gravitate towards what's comfortable for them.

Felicia's parents gave her cultural cues through their parenting styles and what they chose to enroll her into as a child, which gave her the foundation on how to react to race,

> My parents didn't really enroll me in things that were predominantly more one race than the other, so I really did experience both worlds and that, like I socially and for instance school, my school is really, really diverse; my friends are diverse, so it's kind of hard to say… Even in my household my dad doesn't parent me more than my mom so I really think I have like an equal balance. They really did a good job of that... I was in dance, and there was two Black people in dance school, but I also ran track and track's predominantly Black, so I really feel like I experienced both worlds.

A conscious effort was taken to enroll both of these participants in activities that involved different types of people. It may be relative to the predominately White neighborhoods that each of these participants in which they were raised. However, it correlates to the predominately White institution of Big U and the desire of each of these

students to find groups that had diverse memberships in order to interact with different types of students.

Relating to culture

How to relate to culture was often taught in the home, who visited, what types of friends student's parents had, what it is/was like to be Black or White in America. Michael was raised in a predominately Black neighborhood with a White mother. He spoke about cultural cues that his upbringing implied, which could be thought of as stereotypical.

> Culture was I guess, I don't know, I joke with my friends like my mom should have been more Black because like when we were little she would give us kool-aid and cornbread and stuff like that, but it wasn't because like I have these mixed kids, it was because it was the cheapest. And like for a single mom it just kind of worked out. So, I would say that we had this African American kind of experience but it was because it was like what was available for my mom….. so like the way I grew up with my neighborhood being mixed, my elementary school being mixed, and me being mixed, I felt like I grew up and that was the norm, but I just realized it last night that most of the world is probably still like one considers themselves one race.

Felicia discussed the differences between her White family and her Black family, pointing out that there were definite ways in which they both operated. She needed to learn how to do things when she was with each side.

> Like my White family likes to play cribbage and things like that. My White grandma likes to go shopping. We just have more in common. I think that's more of what it is, just more different activities that you're interested in. Nothing in particular, but you do like act differently when you're visiting one family than the other.

Cultural cues are inherent ways that parents indicate to their children at a foundational level who they are and what to say and do in certain situations. The parents of the participants in this study seemed to give clear cues about the different backgrounds that their children had as well as how to act and react. Each of the eight students took

these cues and have incorporated them into the lives for which friends they choose, what groups they decide to join and how to react in certain situations.

The social and historical context

The social and historical context refers to the social responses to issues of race, racism, interracial relationships and history. The one drop rule is an example of a historical context which states if a person has one drop of Black blood, they are considered Black. Multiracial people, in particular those of Black-White ancestry are visually categorized by others and other times directly asked "what are you?". Multiracial identity pushes against what we commonly think of when categorizing by race by making the boundaries less clear than ever before. The students in this study struggled daily with identifying themselves to others, experienced differing treatment based on the answer that they gave and at times did not fit in once they claimed an identity. At least two students discussed being exposed to racist jokes and not being recognized as a person of color.

What are you?

When students were asked how they identify, they had a number of different responses. The need for categorization is a natural inclination for many people, and putting people into racial categories leads to the question "so what are you?". All eight students identify as Black most of the time. Sometimes they did not "feel" accepted by the Black community, but they would still respond with this racial category before any others. The students who discussed this question had differing reactions, sometimes depending on who was asking.

Darryl commented,

> It's kind of like, soooo, what are you? It really varies. Sometimes it's like really blunt, like what race are you? And then sometimes they go about it in around

about way and it'll take them awhile. You can sense that they're trying to figure it out, and even then it's really hard to explain, right, I have to like basically tell them the whole story and sometimes I just don't feel like doing that. They still don't kind of understand even after I tell them so…

It was just always like the kids growing up, some of them were very blunt in asking and some would go in around about kind of way, but being multi-racial never felt like it held me back, like if anything I can get along with all the different groups of kids.

When asking Felicia how she describes herself racially, she said,

I would say African American first. Even though I feel like I'm not as accepted with that group, I still feel like I identify more with them. That's kind of weird,

and it kind of clashes each other but I definitely say I'm African American first and, my mom's White…. Well, most people have already assumed that I'm Black and White. Are you mixed with White, kind of thing. Like, yeah. Like, I don't understand why you need to ask; it doesn't really matter. Some of it is positive, oh your hair is really pretty.

Michael said,

I would say, for me, and probably most mixed people that I meet, they mostly identify with Black people, and I feel like the main reasons are for instance if we're walking down the street…like, people, especially White people, aren't going to be like 'White'. Whenever we're doing our racial categorizations, people aren't going to automatically see me and think White, you know? Just because of my skin I'm marked, like I'm gonna be put into this racial other category that I feel like, it just goes down to racism I guess….. Usually it ends up like, if someone sees me and they ask what I am then if I tell them mulatto then they'll look at me and I'll be like, my dad's Black and my mom's White. I have

to like break it down for them anyway. I don't know why most people wouldn't know what that was.

Bill said,

I don't probably because people, as I've seen growing up, become more sensitive about it and don't ask questions about it, they just go like, cause I mean I am Black but it's obvious that I am this other culture, but it comes to a point that even

though you are mixing other cultures if you have some bit of Black in you, you're going to be classified as Black no matter what.

Kerwin et al. (1993) writes about biracial Black-White children ultimately choosing the race of one parent over the other, typically it is the African American parent. Because society will ultimately categorize Black-White children as Black, it is best for them to identify that way. The participants in this study reify this notion as all of them also chose to be categorized as Black. Although they may identify as Black, the acceptance into Black organizations is another issue, discussed later in this chapter.

Racist Jokes

Darryl and Trinity talked about exposure to racists jokes, seeming to be in situations where the other people in the crowd did not think of them as a person of color. Both students had different opinions of how these jokes affected them and how they chose to respond.

Darryl said,

> And like also I'm not exactly…I mean, if someone makes like a racist joke or something…and I make racist jokes and I'll say I'm multi-racial so I can make fun of any race, right, and that's just my joke even though I know it's wrong. But when someone makes like a race joke about me it doesn't even bother me cause I don't even identify with that race, so it's like okay yeah. I mean, I'll laugh and stuff but I don't…it doesn't offend me. I don't know, I think it's funny.

Trinity said,

> I had White friends but there were a little bit, like my friend Erica she would have Black jokes and say it in front of me like I didn't think I wasn't Black. I mean, that's still kind of offensive. My mother is dark-skinned and just because I'm not doesn't mean that I don't come from that culture.

Vanessa talked about a friend, who made some racial comments,

> Yeah, she was White. Then she had said one thing, like her friend was dating a Black person and she was like, you know I can be friends with Black people but I could never date them, that's just disgusting, or something like that. And I was like, who do you think you're talking to, that's not okay, like I would never make a joke about you and right in front of you. I know it's funny for some people and some people have a lot of humor, I don't really care if people make racial jokes, I understand everyone has stereotypes, but when it becomes personal I think that's

> like, okay you can't just say that right in front of me without thinking I'm going to get a little upset.

Racist jokes and the response to them is presented in a social and historical context because two of the students had differing responses to the jokes, most likely based on the cultural cues from their parents, racial makeup of their families and whether conversations about race occurred in the home. Darryl remarked that he and his family did not have many conversations about race, and he was not offended by the jokes. He was also raised by mixed-race parents who live internationally. Trinity and Vanessa were both raised by African American mothers who were both divorced or separated from their White or mixed-race partners. The conversations about race most likely differed markedly in each of these homes for the students.

Phenotype

Phenotype is a large visual marker for multiracial people, whether one is light skinned or dark, has differing features that may identify as a member of a certain racial background, and has "good" hair or not.

Vanessa commented,

> Well, I wanted to be blond with blue eyes till I was like 11, and I guess I didn't really notice my race for a long time until I was like, well that could never happen for me.

These more obvious physical cues can make some students feel awkward about walking into an all Black space or student organization meeting, aligning with a fear that they will not be accepted because they are obviously "different" or "mixed".

Michael said,

> I think our skin marks us; it's always visible, it's always there. If I'm around White kids, they'll assume that I'm Black. Black kids will be able to recognize that I'm mixed. They'll ask me, what are you mixed with? Even in high school, my freshman year I didn't really sit with anybody during this one lunch period just because I went to the magnet school and I had the lunch that wasn't with anybody from my magnet school, and these group of Black kids they were like

> 'hey, come sit with us'. So I sat with them and they were like, 'Are you Mexican?' and I was like, 'no'. And they were like, 'what are you?' I was like, 'I'm Black and White', and they were like, 'oh, Troy, he's one of you', he was like the only White kid in the group. It was like they automatically associated me with this White guy that was in the group.

Phenotype and skin tone are widely debated topics. Felicia said, "Well, I think it's just because of the way I look. I think it's just because I'm Whiter". Typically, the lighter the skin tone, the more appealing and positive attributes. "Skin tone bias is the tendency to perceive or behave toward members of a racial category based on the lightness or darkness of their skin tone" (Gray, 2002). Each of the participants in this study had stories to tell about their lighter phenotype. Bill talked about being the only light one in his family, and how his brother was "dark, I mean really dark".

Lisa spoke about comments that she receives from her friends,

> My freshman year here, it was awful, I was called Casper or Alice in Wonderland, I got a lot of I was White as snow, or just stuff like that…. Yeah, to a certain extent, now it's more joking around like, you're still pale, it's summer you're supposed to be tan, but not as much Casper. There's a guy who does it all the time, just messes around, I guess you get used to it after awhile. I don't have a problem with skin color, just be nice.

Although lighter skin gave them advantages at some times, as one of the women commented about being seen as more attractive to Black men ("for some reason"), fitting in with the Black community because of the outward marker of lighter skin also left them feeling subordinate at other times. Internalized racism perpetuates the concept that lighter skin is more beautiful ("Whiter"), but also can ostracize those who have this lighter skin as not fully "Black" in the Black community. Lisa had friends that outwardly called her derogatory names like Casper, leaving her with the cultural cue that her skin was not a positive thing, it was something of which to make fun. Skin color was one of the main factors talked about over and over as a hindrance to walking into a student organization meeting on their own, especially if it was an all Black organization. It left them feeling too "obvious" and as "not fitting in unless they get to know me".

Lisa said,

> Sometimes I wish the Black community would be more receptive to mixed students and accept them for being mixed and not just Black or White. I think negative connotations can come with being mixed, or at the same time some guys prefer the light-skinned girls over the dark-skinned girls and you get treated differently, and sometimes when I see them treat me a little better than one of my friends when they're all Black, and that kind of disturbs me.

Black Hair

Black hair has long historical ties or "weaves". Because "White" hair, straight hair, has been seen in the past to have more positive connotations, those with hair closest to that model have also been seen as having "good hair". "Bad hair" or more kinky, natural, nappy Black hair is something that Black women have created an industry around trying to make our Black hair into different textures, shapes and lengths. Internalized racism tells us that hair that looks more "White" is the preference, is better, more beautiful. The politics of Black hair also runs deep, with racism and negative attributes sunk deep into the roots. The hair is as different on each one of the participants as it is on the rest of the population. However, many of the women in this study had "good hair" because of their multiracial roots. Jaiden spoke about her natural hair and the politics of it; Vanessa showed her long, curly hair to me during the interview.

Jaiden said,

> Initially it had nothing to do, I wasn't trying to make any statement. It was just, dying and perming is just damaging to your hair. That is initially why I decided to go natural because my hair was breaking and it was just unhealthy. But when I became natural I got a lot of questions, mostly from Black women, like 'why did you decide to go natural' or tips, you know. Then coming to Big U, it's a very hot-topic of discussion because, as I told you I'm in the professional organization for psychologists, so we had a specific meeting about this, and so to some natural women perming your hair or dying your hair is a symbol of self-hatred. I don't really take it that seriously. In some ways I feel like it does impact what you deem to be attractive, so there's like this very euro-centric idea of attractiveness, so like straighter, lighter hair is more attractive. Some people argue, 'well, you're Black and White, your natural is different than other people's natural.'

> Yeah, because in the White community, they are amazed by my hair, like it's something exotic and foreign, like 'you have an Afro,' but in the Black community I'm still not quite Black because my Afro doesn't look like somebody else's Afro. So, I'm always like in the middle. I don't necessarily feel that way, but that's the way they place me, I guess, sometimes. So, 'your natural's different' or to the White community 'you're not White cause you don't have fine hair.' Yeah, I talk about hair a lot.

Lisa also commented about her hair,

> One of the things that just pops in my mind, fourth grade, Halloween, my mom dressed me up as a hippie, and she took my hair, which wasn't permed at the time, and made it into an afro. All of my friends were like, oh is that a wig, and I was like, no it's my real hair, and they were like, how did you do that, and I was like, well I have Black hair, and they were like, really? I was like, wow, but I guess for a little while I thought I was like White because all my friends were White and I didn't really have any Black friends, and I was like, no I have Black hair. It was kind of interesting an interesting moment where they were like, [whispers] oh you can do that with your hair, it's really cool.

CONCLUSION

There are several themes which have emerged from the eight interviews which assist in drawing conclusions on how the level of involvement in student organizations impacted racial identity as well as other social factors for Black-White students. The exploration of Blackness and Whiteness are critical needs for the participants, as well as the intersection between the two racial identities and where their power/choice dynamic lies dependent on the situation. Answering the question of "what are you" over and over showed a lack of sensitivity of the many college students who asked. This could be a reflection of a negative racial climate and the need to categorize. If conversations about these issues would take place more on campuses, the more adults that we send out into the working world may know that this is not an appropriate question to ask. Final discussion points, implications for practitioners and future research are presented in the next chapter.

Chapter Six: Discussion and Conclusion

Students spend time on campus attending classes and in co-curricular activities, including sports, leadership programs and student organizations. The time spent in these activities is of equal importance to what they learn in class and their persistence to graduation (Wolf-Wendel, et al., 2009). The choices students make on which activities to join is a direct reflection of their personality, upbringing and various aspects of their identity. Included in identity is the race of the person, their cultural attachment and their view of race as it pertains to themselves and others. For multiracial students, racial identity is a complex process. Racial identity is defined as the process by which persons of color develop a positive sense of self in the context of a society that discriminates against them (Parham & Helms, 1981). Therefore, the choice of what to do outside of class thus becomes a complex process as well. Subtle pressures from peers to choose a racial identity makes it more difficult to join a race based group, and if so, which part of their racial identity do they match with the group. Other students avoid racial affinity groups because of this pressure.

The purpose of this study was to explore Black-White multiracial student involvement on a predominately White campus and the relation to the student's racial and social identities. This research contributes to the literature about students of color on college campuses and fills a gap regarding how Black-White students find student groups and how the involvement affects racial and other social identities. The factors of students' family backgrounds, high level of involvement in organizations and their concept of Blackness and Whiteness were all related to their racial identity. The implications of the study provides valuable practical knowledge for how practitioners can begin or continue the work to make a positive racial climate at universities for all students. It also encourages the inclusion of multiracial students in all facets our

campuses including the language used when describing or discussing race; the production of campus programs to include multiracial students; building awareness about Black-White students and their struggles regarding identity; and the inclusion of multiracial students into spaces and places where they might find acceptance.

This study included interviews with eight Black-White students and ended with several major findings relevant to future research and practical knowledge for practitioners.

1. Racial identity was related to their level of involvement in student organizations as well as what types of groups they chose to investigate. Because student groups play a role on campus for leadership opportunities and growth, all eight students took advantage of joining some sort of organization to round out their college career. Students who were consistently involved in at least 1-2 groups had explored various opportunities on campus including race based and professional groups and had made decisions to stay or depart the organization.

   Race was a significant factor in their decisions as the topic was always at the forefront of many things that the participants did.
2. Their childhood had an impact in terms of the depth of conversation the participants had with their parents about race and being a multiracial person. The more the students had discussed race with their parents growing up including how to respond to racial inquiries, the more comfortable they were in their decisions to seek out or avoid certain types of race based groups, like Black social organizations or Black professional groups.
3. The participants reflections on their Blackness and Whiteness, as well as their identity as a multiracial person presented an interesting analysis regarding “acting White” and being “Black enough” which the students struggled with on a

continual basis. Internalized racism played a large role in how some of the participants viewed the Black community and in what they determined was acceptable behavior. Internalized racism also reversely impacted how some Black peers did not accept them as members of the Black community because of their lighter phenotype.

4. The racial climate of Big U as socially segregated by race impacted the participants' ability to interact with more diverse groups, where some of them felt more comfortable. The social segregation created an environment in which more people than ever asked the students, "what are you?", which reinforced the need for a solid foundation from childhood on how to respond to racial inquiries. The environment also reflected the college community's lack of deep conversations about race and the intersections of it with varying identities.

An exploration of each of these findings will be presented later in the chapter. The background, purpose of the study and methods will first be outlined as elements crucial to the foundation.

BACKGROUND

Over 6.8 million people claimed more than one race on the 2000 census. A little over forty percent of that number were under the age of eighteen (The two or more races population: 2000). Preliminary estimates for the 2010 Census show that those checking more than one race box grew by 35%, totaling almost 3.78 million (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). "Millenial students also are far more likely to be biracial or multiracial than previous generations" (Broido, 2004). The potential for these young adults to go on to college is may be a possibility, increasing the population of those seeking higher education. Many high schools are increasingly segregated by race and the interaction between students occurs in a non raced based groups such as sports, debate or Spanish

club (Milem & Umbach, 2003). Even if a high school has a diversity of students, they are not interacting deeply enough to discuss issues such as race. Therefore, college can be a student's first deep interaction with students of differing races, with discussions in classes or student organizations. "Traditional age biracial and multiracial students are part of a cohort of students entering college at a time of great student diversity, yet they are likely to have little precollege experience with such diversity" (Shang, 2008). Because many of these students will be of more than one race, paying close attention to services and programs on college campuses should be a focus for student affairs. "As more diverse students come to college from more segregated backgrounds, students may need more social support and opportunities to explore personal backgrounds rather than less" (Broido, 2004). It is critical for colleges and universities to understand the incoming population of students to address issues of adjustment, leadership and retention.

The increase in research on multiracial college students has occurred in the last 10 years (Brackett, et al., 2006; Daniel, 2002; Harris, 2002; Jaschik, 2008; Kilson, 2001; Kwan, Speirs, & NetLibrary Inc., 2004; Lopez, 2004; Rockquemore & Brunsma, 2008; Roper & McAloney, 2010; Spencer, 2006; Williams, 2008). Renn (2000, 2003, 2004, 2008) constructed patterns of identity over several studies; Root (2003, 1992) expanded the types of identity resolution; Wijeyesinghe developed the Factor Model of Multiracial Identity (FMMI) (2001) utilized as the framework in this study; Wallace (2004) proved the importance of family, community and school for multiracial students; Harper (2007) studied racial preferences over time for mixed-race students; Chang (2010) conducted a critical ethnography and coined the phrase "racial queer".

Multiracial students arriving on campuses have a host of needs, not only how to adjust and make friends, but succeeding academically and socially. Students of Black-White heritage have additional pressures and struggles including finding Black, White or

other communities to join. The rise of the population of mixed race persons also presents a needed addition to racial identity development. Some may find themselves the "only one", whether that is the only Black student in a White group or the only mixed-race student in a Black group. Student organizations are an activity through which college students find friends, explore their identities and learn about new subjects (Foubert & Grainger, 2006, p. 8). Those involved in student organizations have been found to have a positive correlation with several areas of psychosocial development. Students score higher on such factors as lifestyle and career planning and academic autonomy (Cooper, et al., 1994). They spend a significant amount of time involved outside of the classroom in groups where they have found a niche. Race based groups can be a means to explore racial identity, and Black-White students do not always find this niche easily. The study of Black-White students and involvement in student organizations creates knowledge which will assist practitioners in counseling and advising, and fills a gap of research. Because this population is growing rapidly, it is important to be cognizant of issues regarding how multiracial students may identify racially in social and academic settings. The results of this research offer conclusions and tools which can be utilized to better the experience of multiracial students.

Background of the researcher

The racial identity of the researcher had an impact on the comfort level of the students in the interviews. My racial identity is also Black-White, which created an instant rapport between the researcher and the participant. Insider/outsider research is still a widely debated topic with differing conclusions such that being an insider brings a researcher too close to the subjects and potentially with too much bias; and alternatively, an outsider status brings the potential to take on a more curious stance and to ask questions one of the same community may not (Merriam & Johnson-Bailey, 2001). For

purposes of this study, I do acknowledge my insider status and agree that it may be one of bias. However, my finding is that the comfort level, camaraderie and ease of the interviews clearly indicated to me that the insider status worked in this case. The participants were able to share stories of their childhood with me as a mixed-race child, and I was able to nod and laugh along when the participants often said, "well, you know what I mean". On the other side of that issue, multiracial identity is a complex topic and whether there is a true multiracial identity that can be clearly quantified or qualified as such is debatable. I did have many differences with the participants in terms of age, where I grew up and socio-economic status. Even our phenotypes did not draw obvious similarities as part of the same identity. "Indeed, what binds many multiracial individuals to each other may be their engagement in micronegotiations related to their racial and ethnic identity(ies) rather than shared experience, identity, history, social proximity, or phenotype" (Mohan & Chambers, 2010).

I learned so much about myself as a multiracial person. I have always taught my multiracial children to tell people *all* of their identities when they are asked the infamous question, "what are you?" or to say that they are multiracial. As a parent, I see the value in helping your children to build a multiracial identity to build strong healthy adults. Personally, I have gained a deeper appreciation for those students who are still hidden out in the world and have never had the opportunity to speak about being of more than one race. I learned the value of multiracial administrators, staff and faculty and have discovered how much I am appreciated in showing myself and claiming my identity whenever I am asked.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study was to discover more about Black-White multiracial students in terms of their involvement with student organizations. Increasing our

understanding of where multiracial students feel comfortable on our campuses, how they become involved and in what activities and what identity struggles they may have provides a more inclusive campus for all students. Racial affinity groups provide support for students of color by linking students with similar backgrounds, language and culture together. Student organizations can engender a positive racial climate in which all students can find out more about themselves through varying lenses. Little is known about how student groups can impact the identity of Black-White students. This research fills the gap in knowledge, and contributes to the literature about students of color. Higher education practitioners can create environments where all identity topics are openly discussed, and cross-sections are discovered. Because of the importance of student organizations on campuses, they offer a unique platform to investigate campus racial climate.

The study included two research questions focused on Black-White multiracial students at a predominately White institution:

3. How is the level of involvement related to their racial identity?
4. How is the level of involvement related to their other social identities (gender, socio-economic status, sexual orientation, class etc)?

METHODS

This phenomenological study was conducted on single, large, predominately White campus with approximately 40,000 undergraduates. Big U was an ideal setting for the study because of the presence of many students of color on campus. Eight students were interviewed. In the first interview questions about childhood and background were asked; in the second interview, follow up questions as well as issues of power/choice on campus were explored. First and second year students were excluded but would have additional needs that would be interesting to explore, although one first year student

contacted me and requested to be a part of the study. Student organization involvement was the only co-curricular program that this study reviewed, participation in retention programs or specific types of groups were not included.

Wijeyesinghe's Factor Model of Multiracial Identity (FMMI) eight factors was the basis for coding the interviews. (1) Racial ancestry is the family tree, (2) cultural attachment are cues that students are exposed to in childhood; (3) early experiences and socialization shape racial identities through language spoken at home, (4) cultural celebrations and interactions with extended families. (5) Physical appearance or phenotype was shown to be a significant factor in how the participants were perceived by others and affected the comfort level of students going to student organization meetings or utilizing space on campus designated for Black students in particular. (6) Other social identities included the intersection between the participants Blackness and Whiteness and how they felt about each areas of their racial backgrounds and their multiraciality. (7) Political awareness and (8) spirituality were not as significant as factors with the eight participants.

The addition of college experiences and socialization was an added category for coding, based on the recommendation of Harper's 2007 study. This area proved to be a significant factor in the findings, as childhood clearly laid the foundation for how the participants reacted and thought about race, but how they utilized these tools in college contributed directly to their racial identity. The sub-factors of power/choice and class were added as part of the "other social identities" code which showed the intersections of those concepts with multiraciality.

MAJOR FINDINGS

Level of involvement, strong family backgrounds and Blackness-Whiteness were three major themes produced from this study. The background with which the students

arrived on campus was impacted by strong families out of which they came. This strong background was constructed by an openness when speaking about race and what it is like to be a mixed Black-White child. Therefore, the concept of Blackness and Whiteness was more easily explored by the students and a self-awareness was prevalent about these identities. The participants' backgrounds and sense of self assisted them in finding their place on campus as students engaging in student organizations.

Level of involvement

Racial identity is defined as the process persons of color go through to develop a positive sense of self in the context of a discriminating society (Parham & Helms, 1981). The process includes college experiences as well as Wijeyesinghe's other eight factors. The college experiences for all eight participants included being involved in student organizations and is thus, related. Some of the participants utilized organizations to find out more about themselves racially so they sought out racial affinity groups. In a study conducted by Talbot (2008) multiracial students who were able to participate in student organizations in which they did not feel the pressure to choose one race over the other felt more "whole". Some of the students in my study deliberately avoided or had no interest in joining a group based on race. In all cases, race played some factor in their choices and for multiracial students, it is an ever-present issue. Three of the students were or are currently officers in their groups. One student was involved in committee work in a Black organization but later left. One student is running for Vice President of the student body. The remaining two students are newer to campus and have not found their exact niche but have already been engaged in the organization beyond attending meetings.

The more groups that the participants were involved in or had tried to join, the more they were able to articulate how and why they chose the group, or left it. Renn (2000, 2004) and King (2008) both conducted studies which concluded that multiracial

students need physical, social and psychological spaces on campus in which to congregate and explore their identities. These spaces include residence halls, multicultural centers and student organizations. However, the participants in this study did not find the multicultural center or predominately race based Black organizations particularly welcoming. Student groups who were specifically for multiracial students or were supportive of their identity provided access to like minded or like-appearing students. The students who had more in-depth conversations with their parents about race and answering race questions growing up were more likely to make quicker decisions about groups where they felt comfortable.

Strong family backgrounds

Each student was involved in something on campus, which could be attributed to their preparedness for college. All students self-reported coming from a middle class to affluent neighborhood and had a parent or parents who encouraged them to become involved in activities or enrolled them in various programs growing up, like sports or dance. They had stories of realizing that they were a person of color, either by their parents having conversations with them about it, realizing it on their own, or interacting with other young people who pointed it out, and sometimes all of the above instances occurred. The importance of parental and family involvement for all of the students was apparent through the stories that they told about childhood. Kerwin et al. (1993) discussed the importance of having conversations about race with multiracial children, and instilling a sense of pride about their racial backgrounds. Each student was close to at least one of their parents, and reported having conversations about race. This factor influenced how they pursued co-curricular activities upon arriving in college, whether it was comfort level in seeking out a group that was predominately White or mixed racially or taking a Black power class to increase their understanding of a community that they

weren't as familiar with outside of their own family. The topic of race was not unfamiliar to them.

The racial makeup of the participants' high schools and neighborhoods are also of note. Those students who had more exposure to racially mixed neighborhoods and schools were more comfortable seeking out racially mixed or all Black groups when they arrived at college. They had more opportunities in childhood to explore their racial identities and to interact with neighbors and classmates who looked more like themselves. Those who went to all White schools or had all White neighborhoods didn't have as many opportunities to meet other students who looked like them and often experienced being the only person of color on their sports teams or in dance class.

Six of the eight students came from high schools and neighborhoods that were predominately White, one participant had a racially mixed school and one attended an all Black school. The six students who came from mostly White schools and neighborhoods interacted with mostly White students. A study from 2010 using Census 2000 data showed that Black-White married couples tended to live in moderately diverse White neighborhoods, which is consistent with the participants in this research (Ellis, Holloway, & Wright).

In college, one of those students did seek out a Black organization that was professionally based, but had no interest in exploring Black social groups. One of the students was in an Asian organization and felt most accepted there but did mention that he was sometimes seen as a token member, but felt comfortable with that. The remaining four students were involved in organizations that were not race based, like student government, violence prevention and an organization for first year students. Only one student mentioned investigating a race based group but wasn't sure if she wanted to join it.

The two who came from a racially mixed or an all Black school and neighborhood were more comfortable in the Black community and thus, joined race based student organizations that were available to all majors. One of those students was in a Black professional organization and the other had tried a Black social organization but left because of his negative experience. He felt singled out for his lighter skin and was told there were certain things he could not do or say as a mixed person.

All of the participants had a sense of self and had either explored or were exploring their racial backgrounds. Because of the strong foundation that their families built for and with them, academically and socially, they understood the value of a well rounded college experience. In a book about multiracial parenting, the authors discuss the importance of exposing multiracial children to a variety of activities, to children who look like their children and involvement in a variety of activities as an important strategy to build a multiracial identity (Kilson, 2009). They also knew that their multiraciality would most likely always be an issue in everything that they did. Those participants who had a more diverse upbringing were more likely to seek out race based groups.

Blackness and Whiteness

Each student was exploring their Blackness and Whiteness in some ways and were forced on a daily basis to recognize their multifaceted racial identity. Sometimes this was because of having lighter skin, being asked "what are you?" or not feeling Black or White enough. The participants were almost always an outsider in every circumstance they described. In Talbot's 2008 study, participants who were Black-White struggled the most to choose an identity. "Some individuals began to question their allegiance to racial communities that represented their heritage when they were not openly accepted by those communities" (p.28).

In a class of almost all White students, the participants in my study were considered the Black person or person of color. In a group of all Black students, they were considered the light one, the mixed one, the White one. None of the students ever said "White" when asked about their identity, most everyone said either "Black" or a combination of other things if they felt like telling their story.

Tinto (1993) stated that African Americans may have a tougher time adjusting to an all White environment because their values and norms may be different than that of the White majority, however greater involvement in co-curricular activities may assist with this adjustment. In the internalization stage of Cross's model of Black identity (1971) a comfort with one's Blackness enabled alliances between other racial groups and an ability to enact change. Helms (1996) found that many White students may never have thought of their racial identity or may have had limited exposure to people of color. Root (2000) added "choose a White identity" to her ecological framework for multiracial people. Daniel argued in his study (2002) that the Black-White dynamic is different than other blends of racial backgrounds because of the on-drop rule. He concluded that there are 3 identities for Black-White people: synthesized identity embraces both Black-White backgrounds; functional integrative/European feel most comfortable in the White community; and functional African American embrace the Black identity the most.

The multiracial participants in this study felt a sense of their Blackness, but were never fully able to fit with the Black community. Daniel's (2002) study was most accurate to how the participants felt about and described their identities. Their adjustment was even more difficult in some instances where they were not accepted into the Black community or the White community. They may have a comfort with their Blackness but the social and historical contexts of what they encountered, including phenotype, may not enable this comfort to be experienced. Internalized racism created a

divergence between not wanting to fit the stereotype of what "Blackness" meant and not being seen as Black "enough". Two of the women mentioned specific stories about their hair, which was seen in the Black community as "good hair", another instance of internalized racism that straighter, curly hair is better than kinky Black hair. They felt the physical markers of phenotype and hair encouraged even more people to inquire about their racial background. "Regardless of any 'white' physical characteristics, others may nevertheless perceive biracial individuals simply as black because like other black Americans, possessing normative "white" physical characteristics does not conflict with their perceptions of what a "black" person looks like" (Khanna, 2010).

Answering the question "what are you?" was a reoccurring question to many of the students. This could be a reflection partly of the campus racial climate. The social and historical context also contributes to our need to categorize people not only racially but by gender and phenotype. Images, derogatory comments and cultural inaccuracies in the media which negatively portray people of color contribute to the social and historical context in which multiracial students are coming to college (Shang, 2008). Affirmative action and socially segregated campuses create environments at colleges and universities that reflect a lack of sensitivity and growth that college students should be experiencing. Lack of conversations, etiquette and awareness about multiracial identity makes it okay for the question, "what are you?" to continue to be asked.

The concept of Blackness and Whiteness is a key finding in that the meanings of what it meant to be "Black" or "White" was very different for these multiracial students than what it might be to a monoracial Black or White person. A multiracial identity was applicable to all of the participants as some of them would answer "what are you" with "mixed" or include their multiple racial identities. They navigated their identities in these racial categories and thought in depth about being "enough" of one or the other. These

thoughts impacted where they chose to hang out, who they surrounded themselves with, and what groups they felt comfortable or uncomfortable joining. This factor, recognizing the familial background and understanding involvement for these students presents some important implications for practitioners.

IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE

Student organizations play a critical role in contributing to a positive and open campus racial climate and forwarding the diversity goals of an institution. Because groups play such a crucial role in the ongoing programming and presence of events on campus, awareness about the goals of the university to become a place where all are welcome is warranted. Based on the results of this study, if students do not come to college with an exposure to diverse groups of people, they are less likely to be comfortable investigating or walking into a group meeting of a race based organization. For multiracial students, it is even more critical for them to feel at ease exploring all sides of their racial identities. Their time in college sets a perfect stage for this exploration. Colleges and universities can assist multiracial students by providing an environment where race and other social identities are talked about openly through campus programs and multicultural centers. If the campus does not have a multiracial student organization or the identity is not recognized in the multicultural center, administrators should encourage and foster this inclusion. Talbot (2008) stated "the goal is not to splinter an already small and tenuous group in college and universities, but to validate the depth and complex nature of race and racial experiences on campus".

My position as a multiracial researcher also proved to be very valuable in that many of the students continued to remain in touch about other aspects of their life. I have found myself to be a mentor and someone who "understands" what they are going through" as a mixed-race person. I have really enjoyed my time with each of the students

and there will be an ongoing mentoring and advising relationship. My experience proves the worth of multiracial staff and faculty who are available to students as mixed-race people who are "out" about their racial identities. Other campuses can benefit from tapping into multiracial professionals to provide advising and mentoring opportunities for students who identify with more than one race.

If social justice is a theme of a university, or a part of the mission in any form (diversity, inclusion etc) the institution has an obligation to analyze the campus climate in a number of ways: racially, culturally, gender, orientation, ability, age, response to incidents. Multiracial students should be included in the assessment. If the institution becomes more aware of how it is perceived by its students, a natural openness may occur for students who are mixed-race or on the outside in any way. Milem and Umbach (Milem & Umbach, 2003) outlined three ways in which colleges and universities can look at diversity: structurally through the number of students of color; diversity-related initiatives through core diversity requirements, coursework in ethnic studies offerings and cultural awareness workshops; and finally, diverse interactions which encourage students from different backgrounds to exchange ideas, information and experiences.

Higher education practitioners can contribute to the forwarding of diversity on campuses, and ultimately to the acceptance and awareness of multiracial students by making sure that multiracial is included as a category on all applications, add multiracial to the language of the university when listing out the racial categories, and encouraging student organizations to produce cross cultural programs. "Colleges and universities needs to take steps to ensure that the organizational structure supports the needs of multiracial students" (Kellog & Niskode, 2008). King (2008) studied multiracial students and found that the need for physical spaces, including student organizations, events or programs recognizing multiracial identity provided persons with access to like-minded

and sometimes like-appearance or like-experiences. "These factors contributed heavily to multiracial students' racial identity development" (King, 2008). The more unique programs on campus should be intersections of varying identities including Black and gay, White privilege and gender, and multiracial awareness.

UTILITY OF THE FMMI

Wijeyesinghe's Factor Model of Multiracial Identity (FMMI) was a very useful tool for coding of the interviews, not only because it was a qualitative study with African American and White adults, which is applicable to this study, but because the factors were found to be extremely accurate in coding. As Chang (2010) concluded in her study, the model does not take into account the intersection of power dynamics. Therefore, it was important to overlay this intersection on my own, and to include questions of power/choice as well as investigating the participants' other identities. The FMMI includes the factor "other social identities" which became quite a lengthy set of codes when the participants mentioned gender, socioeconomics and power. Overall, I would recommend the utilization of the FMMI as a basis for other studies on multiracial identity because it is a fluid, circular model and allows any of the factors to be more prevalent than others.

Each student could also be placed into Daniel's (2002) model of Black-White identity in which persons with these particular racial make-ups can be in one of three stages: synthesized integrative identity in which the person is comfortable in Black or White communities (Darryl, Trinity, Vanessa); functional integrative/European American in which the person is most comfortable in the White community (Felicia, Bill); and African American integrative identity (Jaiden and Michael) in which the person is most comfortable in the Black community. I also found that the students moved between identities situationally as Renn (2004) concluded and were used to "code switching"

depending on where they were and with whom they were interacting. This framework could be an additional model to be utilized with multiracial college students.

FUTURE RESEARCH

Research in the future could include an analysis of other racial combinations and student organizations as only Black-White students were the participants in this study. Are other multiracial combinations of students utilizing student organizations differently and are they as involved as the students in this study? The intersection of other identities would also be of interest in examining multiracial students and their involvement in groups such as LGBTQ or gender related groups. How do multiracial students benefit from involvement in these types of identity groups and how does that relate to their racial identity? Students who are first year students may feel differently about exploring student organizations than the upper-division participants. Diversity programming, social justice and multiracial students would be a useful study to look at campuses who have a strong diversity focus and offer programs which bring together varying identities. Do multiracial students who attend programs on such a social justice focused campus have a different outlook on their racial identity? An in depth exploration of Black identity and White identity in Black-White college students could discover how one or the other identity is more prevalent and what is the process or factors that a person arrives at this choice? This would expand my look into Blackness and Whiteness as it was beyond the scope of this study. The intersection of multiracial students racial identity and their socio-economic status could be another lens if the students were from various backgrounds, particularly low income and did not have the opportunity to become involved in activities as children. The students in this study were middle to upper level income.

Overall, there is much more to research and explore for this relatively new field of study. The population of mixed-race people is growing, and having a deeper

understanding of students who will continue to show up on our campuses in the near future is important. Services, advising and unique issues will lead to the continued success of this population of students.

Appendix A

Email to participants:

Dear Student,

I am writing to request your participation in a research study about Black-White Multiracial college students. If you have one parent from a Black, African American or mixed-race racial category and one from a White, European or mixed-race racial category, I would be very interested in speaking to you more about your involvement or non-involvement in student organizations and your racial identity. Racial identity: "refers to the dimension of a person's overall self-concept that is grounded in his or her experiences as a member of a broad racial group" (Wallace, 2001, p. 35). Your participation is completely voluntary.

The title of this study is: Multiracial College Students: Exploring Racial Identity Through Student Organizations. The significance of this study is to explore how multiracial students utilize student organizations, and what influence this involvement has on racial and other social identities (gender, age, sexual orientation, etc). The implications for college administrators will be a more in depth understanding of multiracial students, and improve policy, curricula, advising and counseling.

Your participation will include a brief online survey, one 60-90 minute in person interview and a 60 minute follow-up interview at a convenient time and location for you. You will be asked questions about your involvement on campus, as well as how you view your racial identity. Your interview will be recorded and all responses will be kept confidential and kept in a secure location. Your participation is completely voluntary, and

you can choose not to participate at any time without affect any current or future relationships with Big U.

In addition, if you have questions about your rights as a research participant, or if you have complaints, concerns, or questions about the research, please contact (eliminated for publishing).

If you would like to participate and/or have any questions about the study, feel free to contact me. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely Yours,

CeCe Ridder

Email

Phone

Appendix B

Title: Searching for Self and Others: Black-White Racial Identity Exploration Through Student Organizations

IRB PROTOCOL #

Conducted By: CeCe Ridder (Faculty Sponsor: Victor B. Saenz)

You are being asked to participate in a research study. This form provides you with information about the study. The person in charge of this research will also describe this study to you and answer all of your questions. Please read the information below and ask any questions you might have before deciding whether or not to take part. Your participation is entirely voluntary. You can refuse to participate without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. You can stop your participation at any time and your refusal will not impact current or future relationships with XX or participating sites. To do so simply tell the researcher you wish to stop participation. The researcher will provide you with a copy of this consent for your records.

The purpose of this study is to understand the experiences of Black-White multiracial college students.

If you agree to be in this study, we will ask you to do the following things:

Participate in one interview.

Total estimated time to participate in study is 60 – 90 minutes.

Risks of being in the study - Minimal

This interview may involve risks that are currently unforeseeable. If you wish to discuss the information above or any other risks you may experience, you may ask questions now or call the Principal Investigator listed on the front page of this form.

Benefits of being in the study: you may gain a greater understanding of being a multiracial college student.

Compensation:

None

Confidentiality and Privacy Protections:

Your identity will be kept private and you will be assigned an alternate pseudonym in the transcripts and in the final paper.

o Interviews will be digitally recorded.

o Audio files will be coded so that no personally identifying information is visible on them.

o Audio files will be kept in a secure location.

o Audio files will be heard or viewed only for research purposes by the investigator.

o Audio files will be destroyed after they are transcribed. The data resulting from your participation may be made available to other researchers in the future for research purposes not detailed within this consent form. In these cases, the data will contain no identifying information that could associate you with it, or with your participation in any study.

The records of this study will be stored securely and kept confidential. Authorized persons from XX, members of the Institutional Review Board, and (study sponsors, if any) have the legal right to review your research records and will protect the confidentiality of those records to the extent permitted by law. All publications will exclude any information that will make it possible to identify you as a subject. Throughout the study, the researchers will notify you of new information that may become available and that might affect your decision to remain in the study.

Contacts and Questions:

If you have any questions about the study please ask now. If you have questions later, want additional information, or wish to withdraw your participation call the researchers conducting the study. Their names, phone numbers, and e-mail addresses are at the top of this page.

If you would like to obtain information about the research study, have questions, concerns, complaints or wish to discuss problems about a research study with someone unaffiliated with the study, please contact the IRB Office. You will be given a copy of this information to keep for your records.

Statement of Consent:

I have read the above information and have sufficient information to make a decision about participating in this study. I consent to participate in the study.

Signature:_____ Date: _____

_____ Date: _____

Signature of Person Obtaining Consent

Signature of Investigator:_____ Date: _____

Appendix C

Initial survey to be filled out online prior to the in person interview:

First Name

What alias would you like in the final published research?

Age

Gender (male, female, transgender)

Hometown (city and state)

Major

Race of Parent One

Latino/a

American Indian or Alaska Native

Asian

Black or African American

Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander

White

Race of Parent Two

Latino/a

American Indian or Alaska Native

Asian

Black or African American

Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander

White

Your race (check all that apply)

Latino/a

American Indian or Alaska Native

Asian

Black or African American

Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander

White

Are you a member of any on campus student organization (s)?

If so, which one(s)?

Short Answer: If you think about your racial backgrounds, are there any particular stories or experiences that you have encountered which resonate with you regarding your race? These may include critical incidents that you recall with your family, friends, classmates etc.

Appendix D

Questions for in person interviews:

Tell me about yourself.

Tell me more about your family. Do you have any siblings? Did you grow up living with both parents?

What race are your parents?

What was your primary culture and language growing up?

What was your neighborhood like? What was the primary race/ethnic group in your neighborhood?

What was one defining moment of your childhood in regards to being a multiracial child, prior to coming to college?

What was your involvement in groups in high school?

Tell me about your experiences on this campus.

Why did you choose to attend UT?

Have you lived on campus?

What is it like to be a student here?

What box did you check on the UT application?

How do you describe yourself racially?

Are there particular words that you identify more with than others, or you use to describe yourself?

Do you identify more with one race over another?

How do you think other students view you?

Tell me about your involvement on campus.

If you joined a student organization, how did you find out about it? What was your classification when you joined a group? Are you a member of multiple groups?

Did you encounter any barriers to joining a group?

Did your race affect which group you decided to join?

Are any of the groups you joined a race based organization?

Have you been a leader in a student organization? If you did participate in a student organization, do you think your participation in this (these) student organizations shaped or changed you in any way? If so, how? If not, why not?

If you are not a member of a student organization, were there particular reasons?

Was there a critical incident that you can describe regarding joining a group? Did you make an attempt?

What groups did you consider joining?

Are you involved in anything outside of campus instead?

Do you have unique needs in regards to being a multiracial college student? A Black-White student?

Prompts: Tell me more about….

Can you clarify…..

You answered the short answer question on the survey this way, can I ask you a follow up?

Second Interview asked follow up questions from the first interview and allowed the student to review her transcript and provide any clarifications.

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